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Sharif Zeid orders tighter tenders procedures

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Sunday instructed all ministries, government departments and public institutions to provide the government central tenders department with copies of all tenders offered to local, regional or international companies. In a circular to all government departments, the prime minister said that all state institutions were bound by the law to send copies of all tender documents, including agreements, terms and conditions of contracts, implementation period, prices, decisions of the various tender committees, and all relevant information to the tenders department. The Prime Minister's circular, which came in response to recommendations made by the Administrative Control and Inspection Bureau, a government body that audits the work of all government departments is designed to help the tenders department perform its duties in a proper and smooth manner.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية الراي.

'King-Mubarak summit step towards Arab solidarity'

CAIRO (AFP) — A meeting between Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and King Hussein planned for Tuesday will give a push to restoring Arab solidarity, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said. "This visit will add to the march towards Arab solidarity at a time when the Arabs need solidarity and dialogue," Mr. Musa told the press on Sunday. Mr. Musa said the two leaders, who will meet in the northern city of Alexandria, will discuss the Middle East peace process and the regional economic summit planned for October in Amman. Talks will also focus on the "security and political situation in the region," Mr. Musa added. Jordan's Ambassador to Cairo Nayif Al Qadi, quoted by the official news agency MENA, said the main theme of the talks would be the normalisation of relations between Arab states. The meeting comes as part of Amman's efforts to save the Arabs from the miserable situation in which "Arab relations have been thrown for several years," Mr. Qadi said. He pointed to the "encouraging signs of understanding" after the visit to Saudi Arabia by Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti in mid-July.

'King to visit Saudi Arabia soon'

Sharif Zeid: Jordan expects U.S. to lobby allies for debt forgiveness

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan expects U.S. president Bill Clinton to be "more active" in lobbying his Western allies to grant debt relief for the Kingdom after his administration succeeded in fulfilling its pledge of cancelling about \$700 million of Jordan's official debt to Washington. Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker said Sunday.

Sharif Zeid said that the U.S. president committed himself to lobbying Western creditors to grant debt forgiveness to Jordan and will be more credible in doing that now after his administration came true on its promises.

The prime minister said the U.S. has also pledged a \$100 million package of military aid to the Kingdom, adding that he sees no opposition in the U.S. Congress or in the administration to this commitment.

"We are in the middle of a discussion about the immediate needs of the armed force" and there is still no agreement on the specific equipment that the Kingdom is going to request, Sharif Zeid told representatives of the foreign media.

Sharif Zeid said Jordan never expected to receive the same amount of American aid that Egypt and Israel obtained after signing their peace treaty in 1979 because the economic and financial situations in the U.S. now are different from the seventies.

"Times are difficult... the U.S. is not comfortable now economically and financially as it was in the seventies. We did not expect to get the same level of funding," Sharif Zeid told reporters.

But the prime minister pointed out that the Kingdom is "not happy" with the amount of aid it has received after signing the peace treaty with Israel in October last year.

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Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker discussing the issue with the U.S. prime minister said over a luncheon banquet he hosted for the journalists.

Iraqi president pardons opponents

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on Sunday pardoned political opponents jailed in Iraq and those hiding abroad in a second surprise general amnesty in just over a week.

The official Iraqi news agency said the amnesty "revokes the punishments of all Iraqis in exile and those inside Iraq who have been convicted for political reasons."

Furthermore, "legal proceedings under way against defendants accused of political offences will be immediately halted, whether the accused are inside or outside Iraq," said the agency, monitored in Cyprus.

It said the decree was endorsed Saturday by Iraq's ruling Revolutionary Command Council, which the president chairs.

Thousands of imprisoned Iraqis were expected to benefit from the amnesty, although exact numbers are not known.

It was not clear why President Hussein has decided to issue such a blanket pardon so soon after a July 22 amnesty that spared mainly army deserters awaiting the severing of their ears under martial laws.

Others pardoned earlier included non-political convicts who had served part of their sentences. Also, many death sentences were commuted to life in prison.

However, that amnesty excluded murderers, rapists and drug traffickers.

The pardons indicated Iraq may be trying to appease the U.N. Security Council, which has demanded that Baghdad improve its human rights record as one of the conditions for lifting devastating trade sanctions imposed in August 1990 after Iraq invaded Kuwait.

They followed Baghdad's accepting to disclose details of biological weapons programme to the United Nations after denying for four years that it had an offensive capability in that field.

Earlier this month, Iraq also destroyed high-precision machines that U.N. experts said could have been used to manufacture components for ballistic missiles, banned by the Security Council under the terms of the 1991 Gulf war cease-fire.

These developments suggest a drive by Iraq seeking to defuse confrontation with the Security Council in advance of a sanctions committee review of the embargo in September.

Croat intervention forces Serbs to retreat

ZAGREB (R) — Rebel Serbs who invaded the Bosnian government enclave of Bihać have started to withdraw after a shock Croatian army intervention in western Bosnia, U.N. officials said on Sunday.

Hundreds of Krajina Serbs were seen retreating from Bihać into rebel territory inside Croatia after the Croatian army dealt separatist Serbs their worst defeat in three years by capturing two strategic western towns on Friday.

"The Serbs' loss of a vital supply route linking their domains in Croatia and Bosnia, exposing the rebel Croatian Serb 'capital' Knin to attack, upset their bid to steamroll Zagreb's Muslim allies in Bihać."

"There are a few indications that the Krajina Serbs are pulling out. We've seen a dramatic decrease in fighting in the past 24 hours," Colonel Jesper Helose said by telephone from the enclave in Bosnia's remote northwest corner.

"Our observation posts have seen hundreds of Serb soldiers pulling out over the border from the northern and western parts of the Bihać area," the Danish officer told Reuters.

"But we need confirmation that they are pulling out artillery too. We need to see it proven on the ground whether this means (an effective withdrawal) or whether they are only regrouping," Col. Helose said.

Serbs incursion, which shifted front lines almost to the heart of the enclave, lost steam late last week and only sporadic shelling was reported over the weekend.

Thousands of mechanised Krajina Serb forces burst into Bihać on July 19 to secure shorter road and rail links to breakaway Serb territory in northern Bosnia.

The incursion was spurred by a menacing Croatian army buildup along U.N. truce lines on Krajina's western flank and a slow advance by Bosnian Croats up the border on its east.

Croatian army reinforcements flooded into western Bosnia when Bihać was invaded. The Croats overran around 700 square km of Serb-held terrain in days, Bosnian Croat offence official Vladimir Soljic said on Sunday.

He told reporters around 250 Serb soldiers were killed while Croat casualties were markedly less.

Stunned by the setback, Serb forces shelled Grahovo and Glamoc with long-range cannon at the weekend and a Croat police official was killed and three people wounded, the Croatian news agency Hina said.

Word of Serbs quitting Bihać came after Croatian President Franjo Tudjman warned his army would surge past truce lines to wrest back Krajina and break the siege of Bihać unless Knin engaged in serious peace talks soon.

"If the Serb side shows no willingness to start serious negotiations, Croatia will be forced to carry out the reintegration of occupied areas

Israel lifts siege on Gaza, West Bank Palestinians, Israelis resume talks

EILAT, Israel (Agencies) — Israeli and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) negotiators met Sunday at this Red Sea resort to tackle key issues which have already delayed the spread of self-rule for more than a year, an AFP correspondent reported.

Under high-security, 150 officials gathered at a hotel in Eilat after Israel suspended the talks last Monday when a suicide bomber killed himself and six Jews aboard a Tel Aviv bus.

A formal plenary session launching a week of negotiations was due to be held starting in the evening, but delegates held informal talks in the late afternoon.

Palestinian leaders have voiced concern that Israel will use the bus bombing as a pretext to adopt a tougher line on security questions.

Chief Israeli negotiator Uri Savir warned Saturday that after the bombing, which left 32 injured, "there will not be any (security) concessions."

He predicted it would take weeks of negotiations to strike a deal to redeploy Israeli troops outside Palestinian population areas on the West Bank, hand over all civilian powers and hold elections.

But he added that for the Palestinians to stage elections by the end of the year as they wish, the talks would have to be wrapped up by mid-August.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said that having already failed to meet a series of deadlines, the PLO would not now "allow Israel to exploit the time factor like a sword in our back."

Among the major sticking points are PLO demands for an army pullout from all Arab towns and villages, the release of all Palestinian prisoners, control of water sources on the West Bank and the right for east Jerusalem Arabs to stand for election.

"The gap is still wide," Mr. Erekat said.

However, Israeli officials said the cabinet would hold a special meeting on Wednesday in Jerusalem to endorse the handover of further civil powers to the Palestinians on the West Bank.

Under an agreement reached two weeks ago in Cairo, the Palestinians are to take over eight more sectors: industry/trade, gas/petrol, labour, statistics, municipal affairs, postal services, agriculture and insurance.

The self-rule authority already took control in the last year of education, health, social affairs, tourism and taxation on the West Bank.

Meanwhile, thousands of Palestinians returned to jobs in Israel as the peacemakers

headed back to the negotiating table.

Israel sealed off the West Bank and Gaza Strip, home to nearly two million Palestinians, and suspended peace talks with the PLO after the July 24 attack.

Radwan Abu Alkamsan, a Palestinian liaison officer with Israel, said between 11,000 and 12,000 Arabs entered the Jewish state via the Erez checkpoint from the Gaza Strip on Sunday. Only married men over 30 were allowed to cross.

Palestinian negotiator Ahmed Qouriea told Reuters: "We can conclude the talks in days or weeks."

"It all depends on whether the Israelis will meet our concern for land. We are meeting their concern for security," said Mr. Qouriea, also known as Abu Alaa.

A PLO official in Gaza said the talks would be moved to an unspecified location after a week, indicating the negotiations would not finish in a matter of days.

In another development, the head of the Palestinian police toured the tense West Bank town of Hebron Sunday and said Jewish settlers there would have to accept eventual PLO rule or leave.

Greeted by singing children as he arrived, Maj. Gen. Nasser Yousef said the PLO is insisting Israeli troops leave the city as part of an emerging agreement on expanding Palestinian autonomy and holding elections in the West Bank and Gaza.

"Hebron must be included in the redeployment, even before Palestinian elections are held," Gen. Yousef said.

Gen. Yousef cancelled a planned tour of the Tomb of the Patriarchs after Jewish settlers threatened to pelt him with stones, eggs and tomatoes. The army closed the area, residents said.

In February 1994, a Jewish settler massacred 29 Muslim worshippers at the site, which is holy to both Jews and Muslims.

Gen. Yousef scrutinised a map of the city as residents pointed to the various Jewish enclaves bousing the 450 Israelis.

"The settlers have to leave or become Palestinian citizens. We are welcoming them," Gen. Yousef said.

Settler Gideon Margalit rejected the offer.

"Hebron was the first capital of Israel. It is where King David started his kingdom. There is no way that we will give that up," Mr. Margalit said.

In recent weeks Gen. Yousef has also toured the West Bank towns of Qalqilya and Jenin, which are reportedly slated to the first vacated by Israeli troops once an agreement is reached.

'U.S. intends to deport Abu Marzuk'

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — The United States intends to deport to Dubai a Palestinian Muslim leader accused by Israel of masterminding a terror campaign against Jews, a Tel Aviv newspaper reported Sunday.

Mussa Abu Marzuk, 44, head of the political bureau of the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS), was detained upon arrival in New York on Tuesday from Dubai in the United Arab Emirates.

The U.S. authorities have charged the 44-year-old with "known or suspected engagement in terrorist activities."

The Haaretz newspaper said the United States had informed Israel of a deal between Mr. Abu Marzuk's lawyers and the U.S. Justice Department to have him sent back to Dubai.

However if Israel requests extradition, the deportation could be suspended, the daily said.

Army radio reported that Israel had transmitted information to the United States showing that Mr. Abu Marzuk masterminded from Damascus a suicide car bombing on the Gaza Strip on April 9 in which an American woman died along with seven Israeli soldiers.

But the Haaretz quoted a military source as saying there was no formal proof of the allegation.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Saturday that Israel was collecting evidence against Abu Marzuk with a view to having him extradited.

Cairo, the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt's oldest and largest fundamentalist group, called on Sunday for the release of Mr. Abu Marzuk, saying his arrest was proof of America's Zionist bias.

"Abu Marzuk's detention is aimed at fighting any tongue or pen that defends the rights of the Palestinians ... and confirms America's bias towards Zionism," the Brotherhood said in a statement faxed to Reuters.

The PLO asked the United States on Saturday not to extradite Mr. Abu-Marzuk to Israel for trial, saying there was no legal reason to justify his handover.

In Amman the chairman of the foreign affairs committee at the Lower House of Parliament Abdullah Ensour Sunday said any decision by the United States to extradite Mr. Abu Marzuk to Israel would be unjust. Dr. Ensour said any attempt to deport Mr. Abu Marzuk from the U.S. should take into consideration that he was Palestinian from Gaza and should be returned to Gaza.

House starts reviewing telecommunications law

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament Sunday started discussions on a draft telecommunications law approving nine out of its 91 articles after a short-lived call from the opposition to send it back to the government.

Opposition deputies, mainly the Islamists, insisted on rejecting the draft law describing it as reflecting the policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to privatise government-owned institutions.

But the opposition, who fought a losing battle against the government last week when the House approved a draft law to end boycott of Israel, had a softer tone in Sunday's session.

Islamic Action Front (IAF) deputy Hamman Sa'ed said that the draft on telecommunications needed to be studied thoroughly. Dr. Sa'ed said the draft did not explicitly show how the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) could be finally transformed into a private company.

The 1995 draft entails the transformation of the TCC into a company totally owned by the government as a first step towards eventual privatisation.

However, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Abdul Ra'ouf Rawabdeh dismissed the call for sending the draft back to government since it already passed through the House Finance Committee.

Minister of Communications Jamal Saraiab said that Jordan could not afford waiting without initiating privatisation of government-run services.

"We are in dire need of

Syria, Israel to resume military talks

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — Syria agreed Sunday to send military experts to Washington to reopen talks with Israel on security issues.

However, Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa stipulated that the talks should focus on matters of substance and not be "for the sake of negotiations only." He also did not give a date for a resumption of the dialogue.

Syrian-Israeli talks reached a crisis point in mid-July after Syria reportedly refused to send its chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Hikmat Shehadi, to the talks' venue in Washington to meet his Israeli counterpart, Lt. Gen. Amnon Shahak.

Damascus accused Israel of refusing to deal with real issues and trying to gain security privileges that would infringe on Syrian sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which it demands back from Israel.

However, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres claimed in an interview with Israeli radio that the impasse was "a Syrian creation."

In a statement Sunday after meeting Saudi Arabia's foreign minister, Prince Saud Al Faisal, Mr. Sharaa dismissed as "truthless" Israel's accusations that Syria has reneged on sending its military experts.

He said Syria would send "military experts" to Washington, but did not say whether the chief of staff would be among them.

He also warned that "it would be pointless to send experts to look at each other without having any detailed documents or subjects to negotiate about."

Mr. Sharaa claimed that Syrian and Israeli military chiefs of staff have already agreed to early-warning arrangements on the basis of "an integrated system for air surveillance."

But he said Israel later insisted on putting early warning stations on the ground after a possible withdrawal from the Golan.

The Syrian minister reasserted that his country was serious about achieving peace and accused Israel of hindering agreement on "any of the security arrangements" elements.

The Saudi foreign minister, who flew back home after a two-day stay, expressed his country's support of Syria's "just demands."

Israel's Economy Minister Yossi Beilin, meanwhile, said a peace accord could be hammered out by the end of this year but only if Syria started to "negotiate seriously."

Mr. Sharaa said there was no word of a possible new regional shuttle by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to coax Israel and Syria back to the negotiating table.

Mr. Beilin told the London-based Arabic daily Al Hayat: "If the Syrians decide to negotiate seriously, the solution would not take much time."

"That is why I am optimistic on the possibility of signing a peace accord with Syria in the next five months," the Israeli minister said.

"The Syrians must present their demands to know if they can be achieved," he said, adding that Syrian President Hafez Assad seemed "ashamed to put his demands on the negotiating table."

"In my opinion he has no long-term strategy and thinks he can benefit from the time factor. If so, he is making a big mistake," he warned.

Mr. Beilin saw little chance for a breakthrough in 1996 when general elections take place in Israel.

Syria must start negotiating on "the details ... and at a high political level," he said.

"As long as talks stay at the current level, it will be difficult to make a breakthrough."

Mr. Christopher said on July 16 in Damascus that talks between the two countries would resume "within a week or two" at ambassador level.

Israeli soldier killed, one injured in Lebanon

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Lebanese Hizbollah guerrillas firing anti-tank rockets killed an Israeli soldier in south Lebanon Sunday and wounded another, an army spokesman said.

The rockets were fired at an army patrol in Israel's self-declared security zone in south Lebanon, he said.

Israel's proxy South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia said earlier that a Hizbollah guerrilla was killed in the clash, and that seven civilians were injured in the southern Lebanese town of Rihan from artillery attacks by Hizbollah.

Hizbollah guerrillas used automatic weapons and anti-tank rockets to attack the Israeli army patrol near Achiye, a militia spokesman said.

"Israeli soldiers fired at the terrorists, killing one and wounding two others," he said.

Hizbollah said in a statement issued in Beirut: "Our fighters attacked at 2:45 p.m. (1:45 GMT) an Israeli patrol on the Achiye-Rihan road."

Hizbollah artillery also "fired mortar rounds at the same time at the Rihan encampment," in the eastern sector of the occupied zone, the Shiite Muslim group said.

Guerrillas also fired SAM-7 anti-aircraft missiles at Israeli warplanes and helicopters flying low over the group's strongholds in the Iqlim Al Tuffah heights overlooking the zone, police said.

The flyover coincided with Israeli artillery pounding two Hizbollah areas — Iqlim Al Tuffah and the West Bekaa valley, police said.

"About a hundred shells fell on these two areas in less than half an hour," police added.

Hizbollah spearheads anti-Israeli attacks in the Jewish state's occupied buffer zone, set up in south Lebanon to protect its territory from militant attacks.

Official: U.S. would go to war again in Gulf if necessary

WASHINGTON (R) — The agonies over U.S. military involvement in Bosnia and Somalia have made little difference when Washington comes to contemplate the Gulf.

If Iraq invaded Kuwait again, as it did five years ago, the United States would have no hesitation in sending its forces to fight Iraq again, U.S. officials say.

"I hope we would do it a little quicker. In other words, we wouldn't wait until an invasion had actually occurred," a senior administration official told Reuters.

Since a U.S.-led coalition drove the Iraqis out of Kuwait in February 1991, a disastrous U.S. peacekeeping attempt in Somalia and an anguished debate over Bosnia have raised questions about Washington's will to project power abroad.

But none of that has changed the U.S. view that the Gulf is an area vital to U.S. security. "Our national interests are as heavily involved in the Gulf today as they were five years ago," the senior official said.

For many analysts, the difference between the Gulf and Bosnia, where America has

refused to send any ground troops despite a three-year conflict that has destroyed the country and riven NATO, can be reduced to one word: Oil.

The United States imports half of its oil and regards access to Gulf crude and freedom of navigation in the waterway as a priority Western interest.

U.S. officials make clear that the problem in 1990 was not just Kuwaiti oil, whose removal from the market had relatively little impact on either supply or price, but the fear that Iraq might march on into Saudi Arabia.

But the officials also draw two other distinctions with Bosnia: Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was a straight case of one country attacking another, while Bosnia is seen as an internal conflict and Washington broadly agreed with its allies and Russia over Kuwait, contrary to the situation with Bosnia.

What U.S. officials less often point out is that the 1991 Operation Desert Storm was, for them, almost the perfect war. Once the ground attack started it was over in four days, victory was complete, U.S. losses were light — 148 killed and the Gulf

Arab states paid the bill. U.S. willingness to repeat the operation was put to the test last October, when Baghdad massed some 60,000 troops near its borders with Kuwait. Washington and its allies responded by rushing thousands of their own troops to the region.

Whether or not Iraqi President Saddam Hussein seriously intended to invade Kuwait again, he soon withdrew his forces in the face of the Western show of strength.

U.S. officials believe the Gulf states have improved their national forces since 1991 but would still be no match for Iraq or — just as threatening in U.S. eyes — Iran.

U.S. strategy since 1991 has been to conclude new defence cooperation agreements with the Gulf states giving Washington access in time of crisis, and to pre-position equipment, some of it in Kuwait and some on U.S. ships in the region.

The Pentagon says there are currently about 900 U.S. military personnel in Kuwait. They include air force personnel with A-10 "tank-buster" and other attack jets, and army troops who help

maintain enough tanks and other armour now stored in Kuwait for a U.S. army brigade.

The United States has conducted eight or more large and small military exercises annually with Kuwaiti forces in that country since a military cooperation agreement was signed after the Iraqi invasion.

Saudi Arabia has always refused U.S. requests to store American armour there despite good relations and major arms sales from Washington to Riyadh. There are, however, air force personnel with U.S. military jets stationed in the kingdom.

Qatar has tentatively agreed to accept enough equipment for a U.S. armoured brigade although no final approval has been given. The United Arab Emirates is considering whether to store U.S. armoured equipment for any new Gulf crisis.

The U.S. Navy last month established a new Fifth Fleet with headquarters in Bahrain. The fleet comprises ships assigned to the Indian Ocean and Gulf region in the past from other fleets, and includes an aircraft carrier.



A file picture dated March 8, 1991 shows Kuwaiti prisoners released from Iraq walking home towards Kuwait City (AFP photo)

Kuwait still scared 5 years after invasion

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwait may have rebuilt its shattered economy and brought in limited parliamentary democracy but it remains insecure about the intentions of its northern neighbour, five years after the Iraqi invasion.

A trench and high wall of sand fortifications, constructed after the Gulf war and stretching the length of the country's 200 kilometres (125 miles) border, bear witness to the nation's persistent fear of Iraq.

Some 243 U.N. military observers who patrol the frontier amid swirling sand storms offer a small measure of security for Kuwait's population as they prepare to mark the anniversary of the Aug. 2, 1990 invasion Wednesday.

A senior official said: "In the subconscious of everybody, there is fear for the future. We fear our neighbour because we don't have any confidence in this kind of regime."

Kuwait can, however, gather comfort from the de-

fence pacts which it has signed with the United States, Britain, France and Russia to protect the small emirate from any new threat from Iraq's President Saddam Hussein.

Their support has already paid dividends. Last October, U.S. troops were immediately dispatched to strengthen defences when Iraq began troop manoeuvres close to the border and Russia subsequently obtained Baghdad's official recognition of Kuwait's sovereignty and borders.

Since the war ended when a U.S.-led coalition forced Iraqi troops out of Kuwait in February 1991, the U.N.'s Special Commission (UNSCOM) on disarmament has gradually ensured the elimination of Baghdad's weapons of mass destruction.

Yet despite the commission's satisfaction that Iraq no longer has a capability to build nuclear weapons and combat gas and appears to have renounced biological weapons, Kuwait remains insecure.

"We don't feel there is real concrete change in the minds of the Iraqi leaders," said Sulaiman Al Shahin, the foreign affairs under-secretary, who complained of their "language of revenge, hatred and blood."

Kuwait is still waiting for the return of more good seized during the seven-month Iraqi occupation, the payment of war damages and, above all, the return of some 600 missing people or proof of their deaths.

A commission set up after the ceasefire has been unable to secure a satisfactory response from Iraq on their fate.

Baghdad has admitted taking away 73 prisoners but insists it lost trace of them after uprisings which followed its Gulf war defeat, according to Dwaib Al Anzi, director of Kuwait's committee on POWs and the missing.

Such concerns, however, have not prevented the Kuwaitis from reconstructing and restructuring their economy and establishing par-

liamentary democracy with more vigour than other countries in the Gulf.

Under pressure from Washington and allies who freed Kuwait, the country has reestablished the only elected parliament in the Gulf, although the electorate is limited to a privileged group and women are still denied the vote.

The parliament, dissolved in 1986, produced an assembly in 1992 made up of deputies who have missed no opportunity to challenge and criticise the government and try to exercise control over public finances.

In its economic policies, the government has raised more than \$1 billion from a privatisation programme launched in September 1994.

Many economists remain confident about the future despite the country's \$4.5 billion budget deficit. Jassem Saadun, a financial expert, summed up their feelings: "Kuwait is much better off than the surrounding countries."

UAE orders retrial of maid's case

AL-AIN, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The government has ordered a retrial in the case of a teenage Philippine maid sentenced to seven years imprisonment for killing her employer after she raped her, a judicial source said Sunday.

The order for a retrial of the Sarah Balahagan case, rather than an appeals hearing, appeared to be a politically motivated decision following an outcry in the Philippines.

The order came directly from the rulers of the United Arab Emirates, led by Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al

Nahayan. A source at Al-Ain Sharia, or the Islamic Court, said a new three-member panel of judges would rehear the case starting Aug. 5.

Ms. Balahagan, 16, was convicted June 26 for killing 85-year-old Almasa Mohammad Al Baloushi last July.

The court also ordered her to pay 150,000 dirhams (\$41,000) as "blood money" to the victim's family.

But as compensation, it awarded her 100,000 dirhams (\$27,000), accepting her argument that she was acting in self-defence when she stab-

bed Mr. Baloushi 34 times because he earlier raped her at knife-point.

The fresh trial was ordered almost a month after both sides filed appeals. The defence seeks an acquittal. The Baloushi family wants the death penalty for Ms. Balahagan.

The verdict caused a stir in the Philippines, where the government has come under criticism for doing too little to protect the large number of Filipinos working abroad as domestic servants and in other menial jobs.

5 hurt in 2 Tehran bomb explosions

TEHRAN (AFP) — Two bomb blasts under cars in central Tehran injured five people, near the offices of an Islamic fundamentalist Iraqi opposition group, Iran's official news agency (IRNA) reported Sunday.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the twin bombing Saturday night. The opposition People's Mujahadeen, which Tehran normally blames for such bombings, issued a statement, in part, to "strongly condemn" the attack and said it could only serve the interests of the authorities.

The devices, apparently hand-made, were placed under two cars parked less than 100 metres apart in two streets in the commercial downtown.

The first attack took place in Koush Street, damaging another car parked nearby as well as several buildings, according to Tehran Radio. It shattered windows.

The second bomb exploded a few minutes near an Iraqi opposition group headquarters and a students' hostel in Laleh-Zar Street, injuring five people, IRNA said, revising an earlier casualty toll of three.

It reported that two children and a woman were among the injured, who were released from hospital Sunday morning. The second blast also damaged several buildings.

Casualties were low as the streets in the commercial district are nearly deserted at night.

The second blast was just 10 metres from the headquarters of the Iraqi Shiite opposition group, the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SAIRI). There are no major government offices in the area.

'German aide helped Israel get Eichmann'

BONN (R) — A German prosecutor secretly helped in the hunt for war criminal Adolf Eichmann when he gave Israel's Mossad intelligence agency access to Eichmann's Nazi files in 1960, the German magazine Der Spiegel said.

It reported that Fritz Bauer, then chief prosecutor in Hesse state, allowed a Mossad agent to photograph files of the man who organised the mass transportation of six million Jews to their death in the Holocaust.

Mr. Bauer, who had earlier given Israel its first clue that Eichmann was hiding in Argentina, was helping pre-

pare war crimes trials in Germany at the time, Spiegel said.

"I got a key for Bauer's office," former Mossad agent Michael Maor told the magazine, recounting how he sneaked into the prosecutor's office by free-arrangement and snapped pictures of Eichmann's file that had been left out on a desk.

"There were Nazi documents, activity reports, photos as well as Swastikas everywhere," he was quoted as saying.

The information helped Israel positively identify Eichmann, who was kidn-

ped by Mossad agents in Buenos Aires in 1960 and brought to Israel, where he was tried as a war criminal and executed in 1962.

The previously undisclosed assistance Mr. Bauer provided represented a big risk for the prosecutor because West Germany and Israel had not yet established diplomatic relations.

Aware that Germany's justice system was still riddled with Nazi sympathisers, he confided only in the then Hesse state premier, Georg August Zinn, and a few other trusted colleagues, Spiegel said.

Sudan plays down student riots

KHARTOUM (R) — The Sudanese press Sunday played down a student riot at Khartoum University against the Islamic government of President Omar Hassan Al Bashir, calling it an incident staged by a small isolated group.

The official Sudan News Agency (SUNA) said a small group of students took part in the demonstration. It said no body was hurt and the meeting which the rioters wanted to disrupt ended peacefully.

Sudanese students demonstrated Saturday at Khartoum University, Sudan's oldest and most prestigious institution of higher learning, as Gen. Bashir addressed them in an open meeting.

Riot police used tear-gas to disperse the students who shouted slogans against Gen. Bashir's military government.

Khartoum University has been the hotbed of opposition to successive governments in Sudan, but the Islamist-controlled government has seized control of almost all student unions at academic institutions since Gen. Bashir came to power in 1989.

Gen. Bashir's government says that most Sudanese support its radical policies and are behind their leadership all the way.

Hyperinflation has hit Sudan in recent years, further impoverishing Sudanese.

who have suffered famine and drought as well as a 12-year-old civil war in the south.

Most blame their hardships on the economic policies of the Islamic government which came to power when Gen. Bashir ousted the democratically-elected government.

Islamist university lecturer Yousif Al Deim, condemned the student action, saying the rioting students should have participated in the open meeting.

He told the government-owned Al Inqaz Al Watani newspaper it was the first time a head of state in Sudan has met students and taken questions from them.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO
14:00 ... Animals of Farthingwood
14:30 ... Hey Day
15:00 ... Survival
16:00 ... Families
17:00 ... Spiro
17:30 ... Film: Gracilla
18:00 ... News in French
19:15 ... French Varieties
19:30 ... News Headlines
19:35 ... Camp Wilder
20:00 ... McHale's Navy
20:30 ... The Bold and the Beautiful
21:15 ... Hears of the West
22:00 ... News in English
22:25 ... The Ruth Rendell Mysteries
23:25 ... Film: "Airport 77"

PRAYER TIMES
04:16 ... Fajr
07:45 ... (Sunrise) Dhuha
12:42 ... Dhuhur
16:22 ... 'Asr
19:39 ... Maghreb
21:08 ... Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swedish Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624990
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

TERMINALS Church Tel: 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Assume International Church Tel. 625256
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 664195
The Letter-Day Salata Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Moderate hot weather conditions will prevail with winds northwesterly light to moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp.
Amman ... 21/34
Aqaba ... 27 / 40
Deserts ... 19 / 38
Jordan Valley ... 26 / 41
Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 33, Aqaba 39 Humidity

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre ... 637111
Civil Defence Department ... 661111
Civil Defence Immediate ... 630341
Rescue ... 199
Rescue/Police ... 192 621 (11) 65777
Fire Brigade ... 617101
Blood Bank ... 775121
Highway Police ... 843402
Traffic Police ... 896390
Public Security Department ... 630321
Hotel Complaints ... 605800
Police Complaints ... 661176
Water and Sewerage ... 897467
Amman Municipality ... 781111
Complaints ... 623101
Telephone Information ... 121
Overseas Calls ... 010290
Central Amman Telephone ... 623101
Repairs ... 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs ... 661101
Jordan Television ... 731111
Radio Jordan ... 774111
Water Authority ... 660100
Jordan Electricity Authority ... 815615
Electric Power ... 636381
RJ Flight Information ... 08-53200

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Nidal Dahleh ... 827195
Dr. Bassam Karadabeh ... 739200
Dr. Salmaan Al Daboubi ... 776751
Dr. Bahjat Bader ... 849362
Firas pharmacy ... 661912
Perdows pharmacy ... 776336
Al Asma pharmacy ... 637055
Naroukh pharmacy ... 623672
Al Salam pharmacy ... 636730
Yacoub pharmacy ... 644945
Shamsi pharmacy ... 637660
Nawaf pharmacy ... 623672
Najib pharmacy ... 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Mohammad Al Khalil ... 273099
Alquds pharmacy ... (-)

ZARQA:
Dr. Ghassan Al Faqih ... 906130
Khalifah pharmacy ... 954417

HOSPITALS
Queen Alia Int'l. Airport 08-53200
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Anon 6428116
Akileh Maternity, J. Anon. 6424112
Jabal Amman Maternity ... 642362
Malhas, J. Amman ... 636140
Palestine, Shamsi ... 664171/4
Shamsi Hospital ... 669131
University Hospital ... 84845
Al-Muhsin Hospital ... 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali ... 666127/37
Al-Abli, Abdali ... 664164/6
Army, Marfa ... 771013
Al-Basit, J. Ashraf ... 876117/15
Queen Alia Hospital ... 602204/50
Amal Hospital ... 674155
The Arab Center for Heart and Special Surgery ... 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)909990
Leila ... 636381
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (09)53302-5, where it should always be verified.
ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:20 ... Sanaa (RJ)
09:00 ... Damascus (RJ)
09:30 ... Jeddah (RJ)
10:00 ... Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:30 ... New Delhi (RJ)
10:30 ... Beirut (RJ)
10:30 ... Cairo (RJ)
10:30 ... New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
10:30 ... Bangkok (RJ)
20:00 ... Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
21:00 ... Milan (add) (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
06:50 ... Khartoum (SD)
13:00 ... Doha (QF)
13:40 ... Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
14:30 ... Kiev (EU)
18:45 ... Paris, Damascus (AF)
20:35 ... Cairo (MS)
21:00 ... Rhodes, Madrid (add) (RJ)
21:00 ... Beirut (ME)
22:50 ... London (BA)
01:25 ... Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:45 ... Beirut (RJ)
08:45 ... Milan (add) (RJ)
12:20 ... Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
13:15 ... London (RJ)
13:15 ... Cairo (RJ)
13:30 ... Frankfurt (RJ)
14:00 ... Rhodes, Madrid (add) (RJ)
21:45 ... Damascus (RJ)
21:45 ... Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
22:30 ... Al 'Ain, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
22:45 ... Dubai, Muscat (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
06:00 ... Istanbul (TK)
06:30 ... London (KJ)
07:30 ... Rome (AZ)
08:45 ... Beirut (ME)
14:00 ... Doha (QF)
14:30 ... Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF)
15:30 ... Kiev (EU)
21:25 ... Cairo (MS)
22:00 ... Damascus, London (BA)
08:10 ... Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
08:30 ... Amsterdam (KL)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN
Dep. Amman 8:00 every Monday, Art. Damascus
Dep. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Amman 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Art. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple ... 700 / 500
Banana ... 680
Banana (Mukamar) ... 500
Cabbage ... 100 / 50
Carrot ... 220 / 120
Cauliflower ... 250 / 150
Cucumber (large) ... 150 / 90
Cucumber (small) ... 200 / 100
Eggplant ... 180 / 100
Garlic ... 600 / 200
Onion ... 320 / 220
Lemon ... 680 / 500
Marrow (small) ... 150 / 80
Mushroom ... 130 / 80
Okra ... 750 / 600
Okra (dry) ... 250 / 180
Orange ... 420 / 320
Peaches ... 750 / 500
Pepper (hot) ... 180 / 100
Pepper (sweet) ... 150 / 80
Potato ... 350 / 240
String Bean ... 350 / 250
Sweet Melon ... 200 / 150
Tomato ... 120 / 70
Water Melon ... 100 / 50

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Her Majesty Queen Noor Sunday distributes certificates to graduates of the Noor Al Hussein Salt Handicrafts Training Centre (Petra photo)

Queen graduates teachers, students at Salt Handicraft Training Centre

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Sunday graduated from the Noor Al Hussein Foundation's (NHF) Salt Handicraft Training Centre 40 Ministry of Education teachers and 19 of the centre's students, a Royal statement said.

The Salt Centre, which was established by the NHF in April 1987 in cooperation with the Salt Development Corporation (SDC) and the Italian government, offers free, three-year vocational training programmes in weaving, ceramics, silk screening, decoration and clay production as well as courses for the public and an in-service programme for vocational trainers.

The centre's graduates help address the need of national non-government organisations and private businesses for skilled crafts people, the statement added.

In her speech at the ceremony, the Director of the Centre, Najah Masso, thanked SDC for donating land to expand the centre with the cooperation of the Ministry of Education, and added that the NHF SDC and the Italian government have allocated JD 40,000 to assist the centre's talented graduates in setting up their own workshops, the statement said.

Ministry of Education Secretary General Izzat Jaradat affirmed the ministry's commitment to continue its cooperation with NHF's innovative and pioneering training programmes that revitalise and conserve national cultural heritage, the statement added.

Queen Noor commended the centre on its incentive scheme, which includes distributing part of its annual profits to talented students and their trainers in order to improve productivity and stimulate healthy competition, the statement said.

The Salt Handicraft Training Centre also offers courses in basic sciences, management, marketing, accounting, history of art, design, applied sciences, Arabic and English.

The centre, which can accommodate 90 students, has 15 teachers and 75 registered students from Salt, Jerash, Zarqa, Irbid and Madaba.

It is also cooperating with the Jordan Corporation for Investment and Development of the South, the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company and Al-Hassa Ladies' Cooperative Society to train people for the clay production project at Hassa as well.

Mrs. In'am Mufti accompanied Queen Noor to the event, the statement said.

Crown Prince receives visiting OPIC delegation

U.S. official says group sees good prospects for joint ventures

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday received a delegation representing 15 American private sector companies led by the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) at the Royal Court and discussed American-Jordanian economic ventures.

Speaking at the meeting, OPIC Executive Vice President Christopher Finn said there were good prospects for Jordanian-American investments in the Kingdom and for contributing to Jordanian schemes which will be submitted to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) conference due to convene in Amman in October.

OPIC is an independent U.S. government agency that encourages direct American private investment in developing countries primarily providing project financing through loans and loan guarantees as well as providing insurance to American partners in joint ventures overseas.

Mr. Finn told the Crown Prince that the members of the visiting delegation were impressed by Jordan's infrastructure services which, he added, would be essential for joint investment projects.

The delegation met earlier with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker who said that the private and the public sectors in Jordan attach great hopes on foreign and Arab investments especially in economic and infrastructure projects and they are willing to cooperate with investors in order to achieve

overall development in the Kingdom.

Speaking at a meeting in his office, Sharif Zeid said the private sector in particular is interested in launching joint projects with OPIC to attract foreign investments to the country.

Mr. Finn, who is accompanying the group, briefed the Prime Minister on the corporation's aims and activities in several countries in the Middle East as well as in other parts of the world.

The OPIC official said in a statement after the meeting that the delegation discussed several topics of mutual interest with the Prime Minister, but concentrated mostly on economic development and MENA conference.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that the Prime Minister told the visitors that the Kingdom was in the process of amending and modernising its investment laws in order to attract more investors.

The OPIC delegation's visit was organised jointly by the Jordanian Businessmen's Association (JBA) and the Jordanian Trade Association (JTA).

The delegation members represent major American companies in the industrial design, gas turbine, construction, contracting, road, bridge, dam, airport, tunnel, water projects, pharmaceutical, hotel management, chemical, mining and electricity industries.

OPIC, JBA teams meet

At a meeting between the OPIC group and the Jordanian



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday receives members of American private sector firms and representatives of the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation at the Royal Court. The group comprised a delegation which is looking into the possibility of joint ventures with companies in the region (Petra photo)

Businessmen's Association (JBA), discussion covered the opportunities for investments in the Kingdom.

Speakers on the Jordanian side included JBA chairman Hamdi Tabbaa, Jordanian Trade Association (JTA) chairman Zeid Fariz and Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Samih Darwazah who outlined Jordan's endeavours to provide incentives and attract investment.

Referring to OPIC's services, Mr. Finn said: "We take the political risk that perhaps commercial banks will not take and we will lend into this market long term funds."

The meeting, attended by Jordanian businesspersons, included an in-depth discussion on prospects for future Jordanian and American private sector cooperation.

Ministry plans to lease tourist locations to private sector

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities plans to lease several tourist locations to the private sector and will accept bids from Jordanian investors, Minister of Tourism Abdul Ilah Khatib said on Sunday.

The ministry first intends to lease existing resthouses at Ajloun, Mkwawer and the Jubilee Forest in Karak, Mr. Khatib said.

Also he said, there are pools outside the ruins of Jerash which are currently used for agricultural irrigation, and which could be converted back into swimming pools for use by local tourists and others.

The ministry has also requested that hotel owners in Aqaba to work on tour packages that would be attractive to Jordanians looking for somewhere to spend holidays during the

low tourism season, said the minister.

Mr. Khatib said that extra marketing activities and promotional measures by these hotels would raise tourism activity in the port city in non-peak period.

The minister stressed the importance of tourist agencies fulfilling their obligations to their clients by seeing to it that tours operate on schedule and all details of trips are well-thought out and planned.

He warned that tourist offices could face stern penalties, including closure, if they do not abide by their programmes.

The ministry plans to invoke Article VIII of a 1991 law on travel and tourist offices requiring them to submit a JD 10,000 financial guarantee to the ministry for organising trips outside Jordan.

The guarantee serves as insurance for damages that could be claimed by vacationers if tourist agencies fail to meet their obligations, added Mr. Khatib.



Abdul Ilah Khatib

'52,000 Israelis visit Jordan'

AMMAN (AFP)—Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Abdul Ilah Khatib said in a statement published Sunday that 52,000 Israeli tourists visited Jordan in the first six months of 1995, noting that the Jordan-Israel peace treaty signed last October has had a significant effect in increasing the number of American and European tourists to Jordan.

The total number of Israeli visitors constituted 11 per cent of the overall number of tourists who came to Jordan from January to the end of June this year.

European and American tourists visiting Jordan during the same period increased by 40 per cent over figures for the same period in 1994.

Reporting that the Kingdom made \$600 million from tourism last year, Mr. Khatib said he hopes that this year will witness even more visitors and thus significantly more revenues.

In contrast, he said, few people from Jordan have been able to visit Israel. The minister attributed this situation to the complications involved in the issuing of visas to Jordanians, adding that the ministry has received complaints about delays in obtaining visas.

"We have already raised this issue with the Israeli authorities which promised to facilitate the process," Mr. Khatib said.

According to the minister, the Kingdom has begun procedures for the legal endorsement of a Jordanian-Israeli tourism agreement.

The Minister, who recently attended a regional conference on tourism in Damascus, said that Jordan, Syria and Lebanon have agreed in principle to launch joint tourism projects which he said would further increase the number of visitors to the three countries.

Minister complains TCC has few funds to meet expansion needs

AMMAN (J.T.)—Minister of Post and Communications Jamal Saraireh has complained that annual revenues collected by the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) are taken each year by the Ministry of Finance leaving very little for the TCC's expansion plans and other projects.

Under the present circumstances the TCC feels unable to meet the growing public demands for telephone services and cannot expand the existing telephone exchanges. Therefore, said the minister, it continually faces a crisis.

Mr. Saraireh said that he hopes that the government will soon convert the TCC into a government-owned company.

One of the objectives of such a conversion is to end the absolute domination of the corporation by the Ministry of Finance, Mr. Saraireh said in an interview published Sunday in Al Rai Arabic daily.

Referring to TCC plans, Mr. Saraireh said one project, the new international exchange, which will become operational in September at the same time as the inauguration of the fourth ground satellite station in Bagaa which is connected with an Indian satellite.

The new project will make available additional communications facilities and ease the present congestion experienced in international calls, according to the minister.

Furthermore, the TCC plans to double the Kingdom's present 300,000 telephone lines to 600,000 by 1997, when 21 main telephone exchanges and 80 small size local exchanges will be installed.

Mr. Saraireh added that the TCC began a national communications project last year following careful plans and studies and discovered that the Kingdom would need projects estimated at \$1.067 million between 1994 and 2008.

He said the project entails replacement of the current telephone networks and modernisation of the present exchanges in addition to schemes for linking Jordan with neighbouring countries.

Since the state does not have the sufficient funds to finance such a project, the TCC is faced with two options: borrowing more money and so increase the government's indebtedness, or shift the burden to the private sector, Mr. Saraireh stressed.

He said the TCC last year collected JD 161 million from call charges and fees. He added that the present rate for the telephone services is high because the TCC has a monopoly over

this service.

He said the creation of a public telephone company to provide services for a three or four year trial period will be the first step towards ending the monopoly.

If the company fails, he said, the ministry would have to offer the opportunity to other companies which would compete in providing the best service to the public at reasonable rates.

Referring to the cellular telephone service which is to start in September, the minister said that the TCC and the company operating this service have reached a deal on reducing to 180 fils per minute the rate of telephone calls down from 245 fils as was earlier announced.

On the Middle East and North Africa conference to convene in Amman in October, Mr. Saraireh said that to help ensure its success the TCC has made available 1,000 telephone lines, 60 facsimile lines, 1,600 telephone sets for installation at three locations in hotels and conference halls.

He said that the Ministry plans to open a post office at the conference headquarters as well as install communications equipment specifically for the media.

WHAT'S GOING ON

JERASH FESTIVAL

* Concert by the Caver Beatles of England, South Theatre, 8:30 p.m.

* Concert by Al Aqaba Group for Popular Art, Sound & Light Theatre, 9:00

* Recital by Arab poets Suleiman Al Issa, Murid Al Barghouti, Khairi Mansour, Ghassan Zaglan, Mohammad Miquddadi, & Jamal Bakhit at Darat Al Furun, Jabal Weibdeh (7:00 - 9:00 p.m.)

* Concert by Bashar and Ayman Zaqan of Syria, Artemis Steps, 9:00 p.m.

* Play (in Arabic) entitled "The Digger and the Blind Prostitute" at Gracia Theatre at 8:00 p.m.

* Performance by Jugnu Group, Forum, 7:00 p.m. -

9:00 p.m.

* Concert by Dio Ayad at Gracia Theatre, 9:30 p.m.

* Performance by several Jordanian groups at the Forum (6:30-9:00 p.m.)

* Egyptian circus at the Forum at 9:30 p.m.

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828949-(ext. 18 / 30)

RAILWAY TRAIN

5:00 p.m. every Monday
5:00 p.m. every Monday
5:00 p.m. every Monday

MARKET PRICES

lower price in the per kg
(Mukammal) 100
new (large) 100
new (small) 100
(large) 100
(small) 100
(dry) 100
(hot) 100
(sweet) 100
beans 100
velvet 100
velvet 100

Zaire faces fresh turmoil after weekend bloodshed

KINSHASA (R) — Zaire faces fresh political turmoil after security forces opened fire on a weekend protest in the capital by a radical fringe loyal to the memory of slain independence Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba.

The mainstream radical opposition, at the forefront of pro-democracy protest in the early 1990s, said Saturday's shooting would not divert it from its plan for a campaign of anti-government action from Tuesday.

Prime Minister Kengo Wa Dondo, popular in the west for his efforts to clean up Zaire's corruption-plagued economy, meanwhile called a special cabinet meeting to discuss the unrest which doctors say killed nine civilians and a gendarme.

"The dictatorship and the team of Mr. Kengo... are very much mistaken if they think they can stop the actions UNORAL (Sacred Union) of the Radical Opposition and Allies plans from Aug. 1," the mainstream radical opposition said in a

statement. "Our supporters are utterly determined, even if it means risking our lives, to carry out all the actions foreseen," Kibassa Maliba, leader of its supporters in parliament, added.

Zaire's turbulent transition to democracy has been comparatively peaceful since 1990, when five people died in scattered political unrest and when rioting soldiers rejected wages paid with a discredited new banknote killed 65 people.

Saturday's incident evoked memories of a February 1992 democracy protest by the Sacred Union and other church groups during which veteran leader Mobutu Sese Seko's presidential guard fired on marches killing at least 32 of them.

Interior Minister Gustav Malumua Mbangula said militants of the United Lumumbist Party (PALU) had provoked Saturday's clashes by killing a gendarme outside the People's Palace parliament building and then later

throwing stones. He said they had then gone to the home of veteran party leader Antoine Gizenga, with a view to collecting him and installing him in power at the People's Palace.

A spokesman for Palu, not a part of USDRAL, but bitterly opposed to Mr. Mobutu, said it simply wanted to march to parliament and that security force bullets killed the gendarme.

Justice Minister Nsingo Udumu said Mr. Gizenga, a member of independence hero Lumumba's government, had not sought permission for the march and was being questioned.

Mr. Mobutu, whose supporters hold a majority in parliament, ruled unchallenged after seizing power in 1965 until bowing to pressure from home and abroad for democracy in 1990.

The motives behind Saturday's march were confused. Some sources said marchers were angry over delays in the transition.

Parliament voted in June to extend the transition by two years after acknowledging that elections could not be held in time for the scheduled July 9 end of the transitional period.

The Sacred Union and its allies make no bones about the target of their action. They say Sacred Union leader Etienne Tshisekedi was unlawfully ousted as prime minister when parliament installed Mr. Kengo in July 1994 and want him to go.

Mr. Kengo reshuffled his government on July 22 after apparently winning Mr. Mobutu's sacking against their efforts to unseat him.

The Sacred Union and its allies have not said what action they plan but Mr. Kibassa, denouncing Saturday's shooting as "banditry," said the authorities had pushed them too far.

"It's bad for political leaders to lose the emotion of fear, but we have lost it, with everything that has happened, and we have the same impression from our militants," he added.

Japan's Takemura hints of resigning

TOKYO (R) — Japanese Finance Minister Masayoshi Takemura, declaring a chill wind was blowing against him, hinted Sunday he might soon resign his cabinet post.

One day after changing his mind about quitting as head of the smallest party in Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama's coalition government, Mr. Takemura's comment on his future as finance minister signalled storm clouds still hovered over the government.

The present political crisis was set off by a poor showing by the coalition, including Mr. Takemura's Sakigake Party, in last week's upper house elections.

Mr. Takemura first resigned to take responsibility for the election setback but on Saturday heeded calls from his party to remain as leader.

But Mr. Takemura's own ministry is also increasingly coming under siege.

"There have been various issues such as the strong yen, falling share prices, credit union scandals, and problems within the Finance Ministry itself," Mr. Takemura said.

Other woes include the dismissal of a top bureaucrat for taking favours from a businessman, record unemployment, falling industrial production and bad bank loans.

"The northerly wind has been blowing against me," Mr. Takemura told NHK Television. "I must squarely settle problems in the Finance Ministry."

Mr. Takemura, who has guided the Japanese economy for the past 13 months since Mr. Murayama came to power, refused to say outright that he was considering stepping down because "it could affect the entire government."

"I will make my position clear when Prime Minister Murayama decides to change the cabinet lineup," Mr. Takemura said.

However, in a comment that added to speculation that he might resign, the 60-year-old politician said he believed there should be a major cabinet overhaul.

"If the Murayama government continues to stay on, it's better to make a fresh start with a large-scale cabinet reshuffle," Mr. Takemura said.

Coalition officials say Mr. Murayama plans a cabinet reshuffle in the next week or so to answer voter dissatisfaction expressed in the June 23 House of Councillors election.

In the polls Sakigake won three seats, half the number it wanted, and the ruling bloc as a whole ended seven short of its target of 75 seats.

The result set off deep soul-searching about whether the coalition of Mr. Murayama's Socialists, the long-ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and Sakigake, an LDP splinter group, should stay together.

In Sunday's television interviews Mr. Takemura shattered efforts to show coalition unity when he said his Sakigake Party would not serve under an LDP prime minister and be also called for the creation of a new party before the next general election.

"It's not easy for our party to support a prime minister from the LDP," Mr. Takemura said. "That's because Sakigake is made up of LDP defectors."

Mr. Takemura revealed talks would start soon between Sakigake and Mr. Murayama's Socialists about forming a new combined party.

"We will not be able to fight in the next general election unless we set up a new political party which can garner 20-30 per cent of the people's support," Mr. Takemura said.

The press and business groups are increasingly calling for swift general elections, not scheduled until mid-1997, to end what they say is lack of government leadership.

UFO crash documents 'were destroyed,' legislator

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico (AFP) — A U.S. legislator said that crucial documents on what some believe was a crashed alien spaceship were destroyed decades ago.

A General Accounting Office (GAO) report revealed no new information on the 1947 incident and showed important documents were missing and destroyed perhaps 40 years ago, said Republican Representative Steve Schiff of New Mexico.

"Documents that should have provided more information were destroyed," he said, adding that "the military cannot explain who destroyed them or why."

"My understanding is that these were permanent records which should not have been destroyed," Mr. Schiff said. The U.S. military has said wreckage near what was Roswell Army Air Force Base was likely a balloon that had been launched to detect Soviet nuclear weapons.

But the GAO report, released Friday, said only two government documents remain relating to the crash, which has fuelled speculation for nearly a half-century about aliens, government secrecy, and a possible cover-up.

"The debate on what crashed at Roswell continues," the report said. Military officials and scientists have reported that an experimental aerial surveillance balloon crashed near Roswell in 1947. Others, however, have interpreted the incident as the crash of an unidentified flying object (UFO) or alien spacecraft.

Heat eases slightly in U.S.

CHICAGO (AP) — The scorching heat smothering much of the country eased slightly Saturday, but still left many looking for relief from temperatures that hit triple digits.

Even the lambs and ewes were panting in the 100-degree F (38 C) heat at the Pierce County Fair in northeastern Nebraska. "I've seen a lot of water jugs go by," said treasurer Mary Bichmeier.

Cindy Herman was busy dishing up ice cream at Rayke's Grill and Dairy in Medicine Lodge, Kansas, where it was 94 F (35 C). "It's bearable," Herman said. "It's not nearly as high as it was when it was 115 F (46 C) here a few days in a row."

The southwest got the worst of the heat Saturday. Phoenix was 115 F (46 C), breaking the record for the day of 113 F (45.5 C) set in 1972. To make matters worse, 1,500 homes were without electricity — or air conditioning — after 14 power poles were knocked over in an overnight storm.

Elsewhere in Arizona, Yuma Never dropped below 94 F (34 C) and Tucson baked at 110 F (43 C), breaking by 1 degree the record for the date set in 1944.

The National Weather Service issued heat advisories from the southwest through the plains for a heat wave that has plagued the country for about two weeks.

State and municipal officials from the Midwest to the east coast put out their own advice for keeping cool, including avoiding too much exercise, using fans and air conditioners, drinking lots of fluid and even going shopping — in air conditioned malls.

In Chicago, where the medical examiner has blamed 546 deaths on the summer's heat, the mercury hit 95 F (35 C) and hundreds of workers and volunteers were checking on elderly residents, who are especially vulnerable.

In Houston, where the temperature rose to 90 F (32 C), the city's Lighting and Power Co. gave out 5,000 electric fans to people with vouchers from social service agencies.

Athletes in Denver had to contend with temperatures approaching 100 F (38 C) for the second straight day at the U.S. Olympic Festival. Two sprinters were hospitalized for dehydration after their 400-metre races.

"It was extremely tough to compete in this weather," said another runner, Andrew Valmon of New York. "As far as heat and humidity, I've never felt anything like it."

In southern California, where it reached 115 F (46 C) in Palm Springs and the smog readings were unhealthy, the parking lots at the beach in Malibu were packed by 11 a.m.

"It's a great place to be on a day like today," said life-guard Lt. Dave Story in Santa Monica, where the Pacific Ocean was a cool 68 F (20 C). Meanwhile, oppressive heat and suffocating darkness seared their way into Julio Martinez's mind during a heat wave two weeks ago. Nightmares have haunted him ever since.

Cambodian soldiers blame Thailand for rebel victory

POIPEH, Cambodia (AFP) — Cambodian soldiers and a senior army commander Sunday blamed interference from Thai civilians and military for their failure to capture a key Khmer Rouge base.

Phnom Penh troops completed their withdrawal from positions around Klor Nap about 15 kilometres (nine miles) south of this border town late last week under heavy counter-attacks from the rebels.

Wounded soldiers in the Red Cross hospital at Mongkol Borei, 55 kilometres east of here, said the Khmer Rouge artillery and ground assaults came not the south and west — rebel-held territory in Cambodia — and the north, in Thailand.

"Thai help is very important for the Khmer Rouge," the senior commander for the area, based near the Thai border told AFP, "without it they could not push us back."

He said a large number of the estimated 200 casualties his troops sustained were caused by direct or indirect Thai assistance to the rebels.

But he declined to give numbers as he said this would disrupt talks on the issue between top-ranking Cambodian and Thai officials.

The Cambodian army's deputy chief of staff General Nhac Bunchay is known to have visited Bangkok at least once this month to discuss the problem.

Thailand has denied it still offers aid to the outlawed Khmer Rouge, and the commander said senior civilian and military authorities had made "serious efforts" to stop the assistance.

"It doesn't do any good though," he said. "Once they leave it goes back to the way it was before."

Thai merchants and mid to low-ranking Thai soldiers in border towns have made substantial profits from trading with and sheltering the guerrillas.

Recent allegations by Cambodian officials in the northern province of Preah Vihear that the Khmer Rouge maintained a base in Thailand drew strong denials and condemnation from Bangkok.

Campaigning begins for Quebec independence vote

MONTREAL (R) — No official date has yet been set for Quebec's planned referendum on Canada but the campaign for votes already is under way.

Politicians on both sides of the bitter debate over whether the French-speaking province should declare independence are hurling accusations at each other even as most Quebecers enjoy the balmy summer weather.

"The spirit towards the referendum is solidly under way," wrote political columnist Philippe Cantin in La Presse, a Montreal French-language daily newspaper.

"Yet we are in July, a time when the search for a well-seasoned barbecue marinade preoccupies a good number of Quebecers more than squabbles between Ottawa and Quebec," Mr. Cantin wrote.

The unofficial campaign was spurred last week when Quebec Premier Jacques Parizeau, the champion of the independence cause, returned from his own summer vacation in Europe. Mr. Parizeau faced allegations that he had spoken disdainfully of Quebecers in a private conversation with diplomats.

While Mr. Parizeau was in Europe, a federal government memo leaked to the Canadian media said he had told two European diplomats in Ottawa several weeks earlier that once Quebecers voted for separation, they would be like lobsters caught in a trap or a pot of boiling water.

A feisty Parizeau denied making the remarks, and then launched his own accusations against the Canadian government.

Brandishing a document stamped "secret" and dated April 25 which he said outlined the federal government strategy to persuade Quebecers to reject independence and keep Canada together, Mr. Parizeau accused the federal government of plotting with Canada's other nine provinces against Quebec.

The document said Ottawa could try to get the nine provincial premiers to issue a common statement supporting Canadian unity at their annual meeting on Aug. 24 and 25 in St. John's Newfoundland.

The report also suggested Ottawa could use subliminal advertising to sway the vote. Suddenly finding themselves on the defensive, Canadian government officials confirmed the documents were authentic but said it was a working text produced by civil servants. Mr. Parizeau was only trying to stir up trouble, they said.

But Monique Simard, first vice president of Mr. Parizeau's separatist Parti Quebecois, said the Quebec government had no qualms about unveiling the document and then castigating the federal government for its contents.

"It's evident that it's a referendum and pre-referendum document. The fact that we react to it — well, we're in politics," Ms. Simard said.

Although public opinion polls show Quebecers' support for separation hovering below 50 per cent, Mr. Parizeau appears determined to hold the vote this fall. In a similar referendum in 1980, 60 per cent of Quebecers voted to remain part of Canada.

"There will be a referendum in 1995," said Ms. Simard.

The official 33-day referendum campaign is unlikely to begin until late September or early October, for a vote at the polls in early November.

The 33-day campaign will be preceded by an 18-day debate in the province's legislature, which is expected to be recalled from summer recess in the second week of September.

Canadian financial markets have already begun to take notice of the brewing national unity fight. Major banks raised mortgage rates Friday, in part because of nervousness about the upcoming Quebec referendum.

Thousands flee Philippines mudflows

SAN FERNANDO, Philippines (R) — Thousands fled mudflows from Mount Pinatubo volcano Sunday as boiling mud burst dykes and buried houses, but no casualties were reported, Philippine officials said.

The mudflows, triggered by tropical storm Gary and reaching heights of three metres in some places, have buried at least 226 houses in Pampanga province north of Manila since Friday night, they said.

In Bacolor town, only the roofs of some houses protruded from the ground, witnesses said.

An air force helicopter plucked eight people from one rooftop.

The mudflows burst protective dykes near Porac town and buried portions of villages in their path, regional police Commander Dion Ventura said.

Most residents were evacuated by military trucks while a few fled on carts pulled by buffaloes, witnesses said.

"We are doubling our efforts to prevent casualties," Cmdr. Ventura told reporters.

The mudflows consisted of ash and rocks deposited on the slopes of Pinatubo in Pampanga after it erupted violently in 1991 in one of the century's biggest volcanic blasts.

Heavy rains turn them into deadly rivers of mud that have menaced communities around the volcano for the past three years.

About 800 people died following the eruption, many of them refugees struck down by illnesses in evacuation camps.

Opposition brushes off Rao's pro-poor plan

NEW DELHI (Agencies) — Indian opposition leaders accused Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao Sunday of trying an electoral gimmick with a \$1 billion package of handouts for schoolchildren and the poor.

In an unusual media blitz, Mr. Rao took to nationwide radio and television Saturday to unveil a set of programmes including free meals for primary school pupils, old-age pension benefits, cut-rate life insurance and maternity payments for the poor.

The government said the plan will benefit more than 120 million people, including 10 million of the most destitute.

Newspapers, which devoted much of their front pages to the announcement, called the package a "bonanza," a spending "spree" and election-season "sops."

Political parties are already gearing up their machinery and rhetoric for general polls due by mid-1996 but widely expected early next year.

Two dailies said the pro-poor schemes could mean Mr. Rao might move up the elections.

"It was clearly an attempt by the government to send the message across to the people that the centre (federal government) had not forgotten the poor and the backward in its zeal to liberalise the economy," Indian Express said.

A rebel faction which broke away from the mainstream of Mr. Rao's ruling

Congress earlier this year has accused Mr. Rao's four-year-old government of favouring rich foreign companies at the expense of India's poor.

"This is a desperate attempt to save the Congress from sinking," Socialist Janata Dal Party leader Jaipal Reddy said of Mr. Rao's scheme.

Congress leaders who gathered near New Delhi last week pressed Mr. Rao to win the hearts of India's swarming poor, a traditional party vote bank. Some 40 per cent of the country's more than 900 million citizens live below the poverty line.

The Hindustan Times said the package was partly "intended to bring cheer to the dispirited Congressmen" in the doldrums after a series of embarrassing defeats in recent state polls.

The political significance was not lost on the opposition.

"Were these children not hungry during the last four years?" Janata Dal leader Sharad Yadav asked. "These crumbs will get the Congress nothing."

Despite the fanfare of the announcement, all of the pro-poor measures had been outlined by the government in March when it presented this year's budget.

"This confirms the government's failure to implement the schemes," K.L. Sharma, general secretary of the main opposition Bharatiya Janata

Party (BJP), told Reuters. "They are mere empty promises."

Mr. Sharma accused Mr. Rao of political expediency for announcing the package on the eve of the reopening of parliament and setting the start of the programmes for Aug. 15 — India's Independence Day.

"It is a violation of ethics and democratic norms to make a pre-emptive announcement without facing parliament," he said.

Meanwhile the murder of a former ruling party youth leader's wife and her macabre cremation in a hotel oven is likely to dominate the Indian parliament when it resumes sitting Monday, politicians said Sunday.

The arrest of a ruling party politician on charges of murdering his wife, laws governing strife-torn Kashmir and the death of a millionaire in prison are all expected to be debated on the floor.

Opposition parties have joined forces to embarrass the ruling Congress Party over the arrest of a former president of the Delhi Youth Congress on charges of murdering his wife and burning her mutilated body in the tandoor oven of a restaurant on July 2.

Sushil Kumar Sharma's arrest in the murder of Naina Sahni, 29, prompted the opposition to charge that India's oldest political party encouraged people with criminal records to join its ranks as

senior leaders.

The main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party and a coalition of leftist and centrist parties will join forces Monday to attack the ruling party over the arrest, politicians said Sunday.

"We are demanding a debate on the criminalisation of politics... The monsoon session would definitely be very stormy," said a leader of the BJP, or Indian People's Party.

The Congress Party has ordered its own probe into the murder and plans to try to forestall the opposition in parliament with a speech from Home Minister Shankarrao Chavan on law and order, party sources said.

The death of a Singapore-based Indian millionaire, Rajan Pillai, in a city prison here earlier this month is also likely to come up for discussion during the 26-day monsoon session, the sources said.

Mr. Pillai died of liver dysfunction in a prison cell after a New Delhi magistrate rejected his plea for medical examination.

He was facing extradition to Singapore on 24 charges of fraud including siphoning away funds from his company Britannia Industries Pte. Ltd.

Parliament is also scheduled to vote on the extension of direct federal rule in the strife-torn Indian state of Kashmir and ratify four other bills already endorsed by President Shankar Dayal Sharma.

Major quake kills 2 in Chile

SANTIAGO (R) — A major earthquake struck the northern Chilean copper city of Antofagasta early Sunday, killing two people, injuring 12 others and damaging buildings and roads, officials said.

The quake had a preliminary magnitude of 7.8 on the Richter Scale and was centred about 25 miles (40 kilometres) northeast of the port city of 226,000, said geophysicist Bruce Presgrave of the U.S. Geological Survey's National Earthquake Information Centre in Golden, Colorado.

The quake, which he said occurred at 1:11 a.m. local time (1:11 a.m. EDT) (0511 GMT), lasted 90 seconds, local officials said. It was followed in the first 35 minutes after the tremor by two aftershocks of magnitude 6 or greater, Mr. Presgrave said.

Two people were killed and 12 were hurt in the city, Diego Henriquez of the National Emergency Office in Antofagasta told Reuters by telephone. One of the dead suffered a heart attack, Mr. Henriquez said, and local radio said the other was killed by falling masonry.

There was some damage to buildings and roads in Antofagasta, and electricity and water were cut in parts of the city, Mr. Henriquez said. It was not immediately clear how widespread the damage or outages were.

Mr. Presgrave said there had been reports of damage north of the city.

At the Chiquicamata Mine,

the world's biggest, and the Escondido Mine, officials said there had been no damages and that safety procedures had worked as expected.

Antofagasta, which is in the Atacama Desert about 700 miles (1,120 km) north of Santiago, and the surrounding area are the heart of Chile's copper industry.

Mr. Presgrave said there were reports of people running in the streets of the city. "It was felt very strongly," he said.

He said the Impres Seismologica Centre in San Juan in western Argentina reported that the quake was felt in large parts of northern Argentina and as far away as Buenos Aires, about 1,000 miles (1,600 km) southeast of Antofagasta.

Cathedral feels blow from stray soccer shots

NAPLES, Italy (AP) — Soccer is bringing down the church. That's the theory from a city councillor after a marble chunk of Naples' main cathedral broke off Friday.

Fabio Avitabile believes pouncing from soccer balls over the years have loosened the facade of the cathedral, founded in 1294 but rebuilt after being destroyed in a mid-15th century earthquake.

Mr. Avitabile said other bits of the cathedral have broken off recently and promised to seek a ban on afternoon soccer games in the plaza adjacent to the cathedral. Many errant kicks ricochet off its side.

Cicciolina resumes stage career

ROME (AFP) — Former Italian deputy and porn star Ilona Staller, nicknamed "La Cicciolina," is to resume one of her careers when she takes to the stage next month for an erotic show, the daily La Repubblica said Saturday.

The Aug. 14 performance at a trendy Rome nightclub, at which she will bare her breasts and "perhaps a little more," could be linked to a political relaunch. Staller said she wants to meet officials from various political parties to set out her views on children's rights, but she denied rumours linking her to Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia party.

Staller's political career began when she launched herself on an appreciative public in the 1980s, winning a parliamentary seat. Her high-profile was guaranteed with marriage to American sculptor Jeff Koons, with whom she had a son before divorcing. After a bitter legal battle, she won provisional custody of little Ludwig Maximilian.

Cat saves China family from home collapse

BEIJING (R) — A vigilant cat saved her master and his family of six, waking them just minutes before their two-storey mud house collapsed in the central China town of Beijing, the Sichuan Daily newspaper said. About 4:40 a.m. on July 16, Li Shubao and his family were awoken by their three-year-old cat Ugly Sister, which miaowed and scratched at their legs and then jumped on a window sill and pushed open the window, the newspaper said.

In its July 26 edition received in Beijing Sunday, when the family did not follow her, Ugly Sister jumped down and started pulling at the trousers of her owner, it said. Li then noticed that mud was starting to crumble from the wall of the house and, seconds after he rushed his family outside, the whole building collapsed, the newspaper said.

Soldiers and civ
Tiger guerrillas

Sri Lanka

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lanka rushing to the Tamil rebel army camp Sunday when his Lankan mine, the military Brigadier Manana, a former army headquarter was about to be was on his way troops at Mukamern town of Battaramulla.

Three other soldiers killed in the critically wounded said.

Liberation Tigers Eelam (LTTE) attack at Mukamern Sunday killing four and losing four men.

The blast came Tiger rebels launching revenge for Friday's abort four arms camp they lost more cadres.

The truck was planted by the LTTE Valschenai-Makam and the brigades soldiers died of the after being airlifted to Polonnaruwa Hospital, the military Brig. Angamman principal staff officer Defence Ministry national Head.

Among his tours spent two years in as coordinating chief administrator of civilian affairs.

He was very personable, said Harry Miller, a Jesuit rights campaigner man of the Battaramulla Committee. "He was the good ones. It's gone."

A military spokesman, Angamman, is to be promoted General and was with troops and allies.

In the rebel-held Jaffna peninsula, and one soldier was Saturday when troops out of their new area south of Alvala attacked a group of fighters.

Six soldiers were evacuated to the Palaly Air Base hospital said.

The armed forces their biggest victory Tigers Saturday killed more than 330 rebels and just one soldier.

Home Guard with LTTE launched a tenuous attack on forces in the northeast.

World News

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victory for
the military since
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wspaper said.



Soldiers and civilians look at bodies of Tamil Tiger guerrillas killed by security forces during a counter offensive in the northeast region of Sri Lanka (AFP photo)

Sri Lankan brigadier killed by landmine

COLOMBO (R) — A popular Sri Lankan brigadier, rushing to the scene of a Tamil rebel attack on an army camp Sunday, was killed when his Land Rover was blown up by a rebel landmine, the military said.

Brigadier Nalin Angammana, a former spokesman for army headquarters who was about to be promoted, was on his way to inspect troops at Mukara Detachment, northwest of the eastern town of Batticaloa.

Three other soldiers were killed in the blast and 10 critically wounded, the military said.

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) launched an attack at Mukarakal early Sunday killing four soldiers and losing four of their own.

The blast came as Tamil Tiger rebels appeared to be launching revenge assaults for Friday's abortive raids on four army camps in which they lost more than 330 cadres.

The truck hit a mine planted by the LTTE on the Valachchenai-Makarak Road and the brigadier and three soldiers died of their injuries after being airlifted by helicopter to Polonnaruwa Base Hospital, the military said.

Brig. Angammana was principal staff officer of the Defence Ministry's Operational Headquarters.

Among his tours of duty, he spent two years in Batticaloa as coordinating officer and chief administrator in charge of civilian affairs.

He was very popular and approachable, said Father Harry Miller, a Jesuit human rights campaigner and chairman of the Batticaloa Peace Committee. "He was one of the good ones. It's a pity he's gone."

A military spokesman said Brig. Angammana was about to be promoted to Major General and was popular with troops and civilians alike.

In the rebel-held northern Jaffna peninsula, 10 Tigers and one soldier were killed Saturday when troops moved out of their newly captured area south of Alveddi and attacked a group of LTTE fighters.

Six soldiers were wounded and evacuated to the nearby mud house collapse. The central China town, the military said.

The armed forces claimed their biggest victory over the Tigers Saturday killing more than 330 rebels and losing just one soldier and one Home Guard when the LTTE launched a simultaneous attack on four camps in the northeast.

Military spokesman Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe said the troops were well prepared for the assault but he did not follow the number of children killed in the pulling at the owner, it said.

State radio quoted area commander Brigadier Janaka Perera as describing the battle as the greatest victory for the military since the beginning of the war against the



Sri Lankan soldiers display large quantities of weapons seized from Tamil Tiger guerrillas during heavy fighting in the northeast region (AFP photo)

Russians, Chechens sign military pact

GROZNY, Russia (R) — Russian government officials and rebel Chechens signed a breakthrough military agreement Sunday which they said should pave the way for an end to more than seven months of bitter conflict in Chechnya.

"We have now legally confirmed the end of the war in Chechnya," top Chechen negotiator Usman Iymayev told reporters after signing the agreement to halt fighting immediately.

Russian Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov told a news conference later: "Now all conditions have been created for civilised work to set up legitimate organs of power."

The agreement, signed in the early hours of Sunday morning in the regional capital Grozny, provided for an immediate end to hostilities, disengagement of forces on each side and a programme of disarmament by Chechen fighters which would be matched by a gradual pullout by Russian troops.

The deal represented the first real progress in peace

talks called to end the conflict in the north Caucasus in which thousands of people have died.

Mr. Kulikov announced Sunday that 1,800 troops had been killed, 250 were still missing and some 6,500 had been wounded in the fighting.

Implementation is widely seen as crucial for holding free elections in Chechnya, planned for November.

But putting the military deal into practice could prove more difficult than the actual signing. One big question is to what extent all separatist fighters, loyal to rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, will back the agreement.

Mr. Kulikov clearly suggested that each side had made concessions to secure agreement. "This agreement will not be met with delight either in Grozny, or in the mountains or even in Moscow," Mr. Kulikov said.

A big question mark remained whether it would be acceptable to rebel field Commander Shamil Basayev whose action last June in seizing hundreds of hostages in the southern Russian town of Budennovsk led to peace talks being resumed.

Mr. Kulikov said the two sides had signed a protocol providing for Chechen help in "detaining terrorists in connection with the tragedy in Budennovsk."

The agreement, reached after talks at Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) building in Grozny, also appeared to have skirted round the most sensitive issue — Chechnya's future constitutional status.

Russian delegates, who later headed back to Moscow, said a further round of political talks would be held starting on Aug. 3.

Chechen Commander Aslan Maskhadov, sitting alongside Mr. Kulikov at the news conference, said: "In this war there were no winners. In the future, disputes between Russia and Chechnya will not be resolved by use of force."

"A very important step has been taken in the difficult

ASEAN optimistic over Spratlys solution

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Brunei (R) — South East Asian nations ended a two-day meeting Sunday deploring nuclear weapons tests in the South Pacific and expressing optimism about lowering tensions with China over disputed islands in the South China Sea.

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) issued a wide-ranging communique at the end of their annual foreign ministers meeting, expressing concern about the volatility of international financial markets, Vietnamese refugees and efforts to link trade issues with workers' rights.

They called for lifting of the global arms embargo on the combatants in Bosnia and for a more robust mandate for the United Nations peacekeeping mission there.

They welcomed the positive outcome of talks in Malaysia between the United States and North Korea to contain the North's nuclear programme, and progress in talks between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation on self-government.

The ministers "deplored

the resumption or planned resumption of nuclear tests in the Asia-Pacific in view of the commitment of all state parties to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty to exert utmost restraint on nuclear weapons testing."

But attention throughout the conference was focused on China, which is not a member, but was holding consultations with ASEAN — Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

China has been accused of constructing military facilities on the Spratlys, a chain of uninhabited islands, atolls and reefs straddling heavily-used searoutes in the South China Sea.

The islands are claimed by both Taiwan and China and by four ASEAN members — newly-independent Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines and Brunei.

China has staked its claim to the islands in the past on the basis of historical and archaeological evidence and until now has insisted on addressing the matter bilaterally, to prevent the other claimants from ganging up on it.

Foreign Minister Qian Qichen issued a statement after meeting ASEAN officials saying China still claimed sovereignty over the islands based on historical claims but was willing to settle the dispute on the basis of international sea law.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, who chaired the ASEAN meeting with China, told reporters the change in the Chinese position was significant. "Drawing lines in the South China Sea would become a much more transparent proposition than has been the case," he said.

He said China had agreed to settle the dispute on the basis of the 1982 U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Philippines Foreign Minister Domingo Siazon emerged from a bilateral meeting with Mr. Qian Sunday saying China's new position "opens the door to a political compromise."

"That was not the case

'Pakistan committed to ending child labour'

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — The Pakistani government admitted Sunday that the country has child labour but rejected charges by a human rights group that it had failed to curb the practice.

"The government has pledged itself to protect children and their rights," Shahbaz Wazir Ali, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's special assistant on social work said, quoted by the official Associated Press of Pakistan.

"We are not denying the reality" of child labour, she said, adding it was the result of the "economic situation

and "overpopulation" in the country.

She said it was "not fair" that some international human rights organisations had used the issue to ban the country's exports, adding some NGOs were working "for vested interest to malign Pakistan."

Human Rights Watch/Asia, in a 78-page report released in Washington Sunday, charged that Pakistani employers forcibly extract labour from thousands of workers through physical abuse, debt-bondage and forced confinement.

The report, entitled "Contemporary Forms of Slavery in Pakistan," said: "While illegally detained in lockups, bonded labourers are often physically, sexually and psychologically abused."

It faulted Pakistani authorities for failing to arrest, prosecute or punish employers who hold workers in bondage.

The group also urged the United States and European countries to ban the import of goods made by bonded labour and suspend privileges pending guarantees that the bonded labour system is being eradicated in Pakistan.

Shahbaz Wazir Ali said the government had already decided to conduct a country-wide survey with the help of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to know the exact number of children working in sub-human conditions.

After the survey is completed by June next year, the government would set up 35 rehabilitation centres where underage child workers and destitutes would be housed, she said adding that the child workers would be provided basic education, good nutrition and a good atmosphere.

Hiroshima bombing stirs debate 50 years later

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Why did the United States drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima?

The answer to that question once was as obvious to Americans as the colours of the U.S. flag: "The dropping of the bombs stopped the war, saved millions of lives," as then President Harry Truman once put it.

But in the fifty years since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a generation of U.S. historians have amassed a disconcerting body of evidence that strongly suggests that it was not quite so.

The bombing was unnecessary, these so-called revisionist historians argue. Japan was on the brink of collapse and U.S. leaders knew it but went ahead with the bombing anyway to keep the Soviets at bay, they say.

It is a view of the war's end — and of cold war icons like Truman — that has gone down like nitroglycerine.

"Unless these historians were to be the first wave going ashore against the enemy, they have no right to make any sort of judgement on the use of this weapon," wrote Venlo Wolfsohn recently in a typical letter to the editor of the Washington Post.

The 50th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima has unleashed a first-class furor here over whether the United States was right or wrong in using such a weapon of mass destruction.

Half a dozen books, a primetime television documentary, countless newspaper and magazine articles have been published on the subject. The traditional view of Truman's decision to use the bomb so far appears to be winning the battle for hearts, if not minds.

A storm of protests from veterans and air force lobbyists earlier this year engulfed a Hiroshima anniversary exhibit by the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum, leaving it stripped bare except for the Enola Gay, the aircraft that dropped the bomb on Hiroshima on Aug. 9, 1945.

The Postal Service was also forced to withdraw a stamp depicting a mushroom cloud over Hiroshima after it drew protest from Tokyo and became an issue in U.S.-Japanese ties.

"Unfortunately, there are a lot more vets than there are historians," said Kai Bird, a leading revisionist historian.

Mr. Bird, co-chairman of the Historians Committee for Open Debate on Hiroshima, says the war as veterans experienced it "should be part of the story."

"But it's essentially history from the foxhole. It does not say anything about what historians now know was going on inside the Oval Office, what Truman's closest advisers knew and when they knew it and how they made this decision," he said.

Critics of the revisionists say they give too little weight to the will to resist among Japanese hardliners, the fresh memories of the bloody fighting at Iwo Jima and Okinawa and the prospects of huge casualties if Japan had been invaded.

"Fifty years after the event, people are looking back with a post-Hiroshima mindset," said Richard Hallion, the air force's chief historian.

"The danger of that kind of a mindset is when you go back to an event and look at it with a near contemporary focus you tend to evaluate activities of decision makers in a context utterly removed from the context they were looking at."

The historical debate over the decision to drop the bomb dates to 1965 with the publication of "Atomic Diplomacy, Hiroshima and Potsdam" by Gar Alperovitz.

It was the first work to suggest that diplomatic calculations with regard to the decision to drop the bomb, a conclusion strengthened 13 years later with the discovery of Truman's own diaries.

"We just have a great deal of evidence that the bomb was used in cold war calculations with the Russians," Mr. Alperovitz said.

He and other historians make the case that by the summer of 1945, U.S. leaders knew that Japan was hanging by a thread, near collapse

and ready to end the war.

Before the bomb was successfully tested on July 18, U.S. military leaders believed there were other options that could end the war without an allied invasion of the Japanese home islands.

In particular, they believed the Soviet entry into the war by invading Manchuria, would shock the Japanese into surrender.

"He'll be in the Jap War on Aug. 15th," Truman wrote in his diary July 17 after meeting with Stalin at Potsdam, Germany. "Fui Japs when that comes about."

By then, though, Truman had already begun to try to delay the Russian entry to the war. The A-Bomb had been tested successfully the day before and U.S. policymakers believed they now had a trump card to play with the Soviets.

An entry July 28 in the Navy Secretary James Forrestal's diary records that then Secretary of State James Byrnes said "he was most anxious to get the Japanese affair over with before the Russians got in with particular reference to (the Manchurian ports of) Airen and Port Arthur."

Three days later, Truman gave the order to drop the bomb no sooner than Aug. 2. On Aug. 6, the bomb called Little Boy, killing an estimated 60,000 people outright. Three days later, the second bomb fell on Nagasaki, killing an equal number.

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Glow for positive turn

THERE WAS good news coming from Damascus yesterday. The Syrian government decided to resume talks with Israel at the level of "military experts." Whether this meant at the level of the two countries' chiefs of staff, who met in Washington last month, remains to be seen however.

The point of contention in the tough negotiations between the two countries is now centred on the stationing of Israeli early warning posts on the Golan Heights. Syria sees no reason, in this age of advanced technology and, space satellites, to station Israeli troops on its territory. Israel, meanwhile, says the plateau is so high that it gives advantage not only to a mounting of a surprise attack but also to providing early warning of any massing of troops on the Syrian front. The Syrians propose monitoring from the air. They must have in mind the fact that Jordan and Israel concluded peace without monitoring stations. Notwithstanding these two points of contention, the resumption of talks in itself especially between the military of the two countries is a good omen. If the two armies, arch-enemies, could talk on such fine details, then the negotiations should be expected to bear fruit at some point, probably soon.

While we understand Israel's preoccupation with its own security, we find it very hard to accept Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres' fears about who would be ruling Syria in 20 years. Surely by that time there would be more acceptance of peace on all fronts by all peoples, especially if what is adopted now is the right choice, namely reaching a settlement. Besides, Israel will have further developed its already superior technology and monitoring capabilities. But all of this is details compared to the real issue here. What seems to be missing, or perhaps hidden, is a determined will on both sides to pursue peace. If peace, not power politics, is the goal, then all obstacles would be removed and in the shortest period of time.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER Sunday said that Israel continues to raise the security issue as a pretext to perpetuate its occupation of Arab lands, pursuing exactly the same policies which motivated the Jewish state to wage wars on the Arab countries since 1948. Ahmad Misleh said that Israeli leaders are holding on to the same old policies in the negotiations with the Palestinians, something which is continually delaying a final agreement. Indeed, the security obsession in Israel lies behind the Jewish state's aggressive policies and the wars it has launched in 1967 to occupy Arab lands which it is reluctant to abandon in exchange for peace, continued the writer. Now in the peace era, Israel is trying to hold on to the Syrian Golan Heights, also under the pretext of ensuring Israel's security, and is holding on to Arab Jerusalem as its capital with no regard to Arab and Muslim rights in the city, said the writer. The same security obsession has caused the Israelis to send in settlers to live inside the Arab city of Hebron and to encircle the Arab cities with Jewish settlements, although such moves are bound to undermine the peace process, he continued. The writer expressed the view that it is Palestinian Arabs who are in need of security and protection not only from the occupational forces but also from the settlers who, armed to the teeth, continue to threaten the Arab citizens and their future in their homeland.

A WRITER in Al Dustour daily focused attention on Iraq and the continued U.N. embargo on the 18 million Arabs living there. Mohammad Kawash noted that Iraqi diplomats are now launching a diplomatic offensive at the international level with the hope of persuading the world community to lift the embargo and end the sufferings of the innocent population. What is helping the Iraqis at the moment is the confusion within the world community and among the world's major powers over a unified policy vis-a-vis the situation in Bosnia which might help ease the pressure on Iraq and open the door for many countries to seek the lifting of the embargo, said Mohammad Kawash. The writer said that the conflicting interests of the major powers are bound to result in a weakening of the American stand against Iraq at a time when the Iraqi government is showing full cooperation with the United Nations. Furthermore, he said, the Islamic and Arab nations feel embarrassed with the continuation of the sanctions at a time when they feel they must unite their efforts to extend a helping hand to their Muslim brothers in Bosnia.

Labour's leading duo looks to win the battle and the war

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres hope their vision of a long-term historic gain does not result in short-term political pain, David Makovsky, of the Jerusalem Post writes.

passed on to a younger generation.

While he gets heckled often, including last week when he visited Rachel's Tomb, Mr. Peres says he does not feel defeated. He hopes his peace policies will be vindicated by 1996.

Unlike Mr. Rabin, he also is known to think that a breakthrough with Syria — should it occur — would be electorally popular. Mr. Peres also says the public likes leadership — people who know where they want to go. While disagreeing with some of their specific policies, Mr. Peres has deep admiration for former U.S. President Ronald Reagan and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who took their countries in a sharply new direction.

However, as it stands now, the political odds are not in his favour. Indeed, one wonders if politicians would take the political gamble involved in the peace process much earlier in their career. Earlier this year, Labour Party Secretary-General Nissim Zivli, who is responsible for Labour's 1996 campaign, called for putting the peace process on ice until after the balloting.

As the defection of three Labourites in last week's Knesset vote demonstrates, retaining his own party support in the future will be no easy matter.

Labour Party official Giora Eini, who periodically serves as a peacemaker between Mr. Rabin and Mr. Peres, said it is extraordinary the two have held sway in Labour so far.

"These two, by sheer force of personality, have carried the whole party with them until now," he says. "It is remarkable (given the electoral stakes)."

However, for a variety of reasons, Mr. Rabin and Mr. Peres are discovering that their own political base support for peace is vulnerable. Previous prime ministers did not have to contend with the new electoral rules. Parties within the parties mean Knesset members will be chosen by the grassroots and not by the ruling leadership.

One cannot underestimate the impact of centrifugal forces being unleashed. If this week was an example, one can expect MKs to defy party leadership on a popular issue like the Golan the closer the elections loom.

Mr. Rabin wants Labour politicians to subordinate all issues to preserve as broad a base of support as possible for the peace process.

While grassroots decision-making is a reform that — with time — should increase the accountability of MKs to the public, it is but another example of favourable reforms that incur political risks for Mr. Rabin with his own political base.

He cannot guarantee he will be able to marshal support for legislative initiatives when he needs it.

This is particularly true when faced with the fundamental changes needed to make the peace process successful.

By seeking to transform a 100-year conflict, one cannot expect love and kisses with the Palestinians overnight. The fact is that Gaza is beginning to change economically, and that Palestinians are taking measures against "terrorists" is undoubtedly a change.

However, politicians are elected every four years, and they must show quicker and more complete results.

Nonetheless, exiting Gaza last year seems relatively painless compared to the new phase of the peace process. Leaving the violence-ridden Gaza was almost its own reward.

For good measure, Israel soon thereafter achieved a peace treaty with Jordan, made forays into North Africa and the Gulf, and obtained broad international support.

However, unlike the first phase of the Oslo accord, the upcoming one means a pull-back from six cities in the occupied territories with no apparent quid pro quo as far as the Israeli public is concerned. It will be seen much more as a unilateral deal benefiting the Palestinians.

As Mr. Rabin said recently in a cabinet meeting, "we have done the easy part with Gaza; now it gets harder."

Furthermore, polls demonstrate that every attack inside the Green Line, such as the one in Ramat Gan, pulls at Mr. Rabin's secular, Ashkenazi middle-class political base along the populated coast in a way that attacks in the occupied territories do not.

Support for Mr. Rabin plunged particularly after the Dizengoff bombing last fall, and aides privately admit they have yet to recover from that drop among their own voters.

These Rabin voters apparently believed a tacit contract was violated. The implicit deal was that they would support the Rabin peace policies if he would do what he promised in 1992 — take Gaza out of Tel Aviv.

Mr. Rabin's political base has also carried the brunt of another important reform — national health insurance taxes have fallen hardest on the middle to affluent voters, who according to statistics were more likely to vote Mr. Rabin in 1992.

The Rabin government must first emerge its own political base about the importance of keeping faith with the long-term significance of the peace process if it is to have a chance of winning next year's election or otherwise be content to hope to win the verdict of history.

LETTERS

Israel must take initiative for peace

To the Editor:

THE EXPLOSION near Tel Aviv, that killed six people and injured 33 was an horrendous and despicable act. PLO and injured 33 was an horrendous and despicable act. PLO and injured 33 was an horrendous and despicable act. PLO and injured 33 was an horrendous and despicable act.

An anonymous telephone call to several Israeli news agencies said Yehiya Ayash, the military wing of Hamas, was responsible. However, Ehud Ya'ar, Arab affairs correspondent for Israel television, said the caller is a "well-known nuisance who has claimed responsibility."

As of yet, no group has claimed responsibility. One may wonder who caused the attack, but the more important question is why did it happen? The unidentified caller said the attack was warranted because of "Israel's violations of accords and procrastination in implementing the accord with Palestinians" and Israel's "assassinations" of Palestinians. While this statement will never justify the attack on civilians, it does raise an intriguing point. Why is Israel reluctant to do what is necessary for a settlement?

Schlomo Gazit, a former Israeli army chief of intelligence, commented in a recent article about the difficulty of understanding Israeli reluctance. He wrote "This sidestepping and avoidance is one of the things preventing the Palestinian side from deciding in principle to end the violent struggle against Israel." He continued to say that "as long as (Palestinians) do not attain their goal (of statehood), we cannot demand that they lay down their arms." To simplify, free Palestine from Israel's military occupation. The day of the bombing, I met a history professor from the University of Haifa at the Church of St. George in Madaba. By chance, we were both there to view the original mosaic floor map of Holy Land made around 560 AD. The professor said he gave a speech at UT in 1958, which was nestled between wars he fought in 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973. I asked him his feelings concerning the peace process, he told me "men were born to be free, men deserve to live in peace." I agree.

To further my point, an editorial in the Jordan Times on July 25 claimed that "no matter how many agreements are signed between the Arabs and Israel, our people, and no doubt many Israelis as well, will not believe in that peace, unless Israel is willing to accept Palestinian self-determination and their right to establish their own state."

The occupation of Palestine is wrong and will only lead to more attacks inside Israel's borders. The late Yehoshafat Harkabi, an Israeli military great and former professor at Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in his book, Israel's Fateful House, called for the establishment of a Palestinian state. He argued it was in Israel's best interest. His words ring prophetic.

The Israeli government must decide to initiate the correct solution, until then their people will live in fear. Most people may not want to acknowledge this fact at the present time of mourning. Unfortunately, this tragic event highlights the vicious circle of killing that Israel created. Once the Palestinians have attained self-determination, "there will no longer be any point in continuing the struggle."

Steven Hyland, Visiting guest, Jordan-Houston YMC, exchange programme, Amman.

Faulty behaviour

To the Editor:

ATTEMPTING to teach a person, who is rarely accustomed to, and ignorant of the ethics of hospitality and good conduct, is a useless endeavour. For some of us, unfortunately, courteous behaviour is just not a way of life.

Nevertheless, in the case of those taking on posts in embassies and diplomatic missions in any embassy, it is expected that they should develop certain charm and good manner, and not treat people with conceit and superiority. It is sad to see, however, that the staff of many embassies in Jordan, especially European ones, continue to treat Jordanians with utter disregard. This intolerable attitude is only made worse by the bitter and stringent procedures and regulations meted out to anyone who is unfortunate enough to need to submit a visa application to any of these countries. Such backward and offensive procedures would be more becoming of the "closed doors" policy, and most certainly do not reflect with the spirit of the age and all this talk of greater cooperation and openness among the world's countries.

The Belgian Embassy, which is responsible for issuing visas to the Benelux states (Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg), and according to a note pinned up on the bottom of a staircase (under which we find the application window) that anywhere between four weeks to three months are needed to issue any Jordanian a visa... take it or leave it!!! (without any consideration to emergencies, trade exchange, economic benefit, or any such issues). One would think our Belgian brethren were still using four-wheeled carts and wooden barges to transport visa applications between here and their offices in Europe, or they had not yet heard of the communication revolution.

Perhaps it would do good for the Belgian embassy and others of its ilk to follow in the footsteps of some more advanced visa offices, such as that of the American embassy, where the consul looks over the information he needs concerning the applicant in a matter of hours, and the visa is issued (or not) within the same day.

Should the Belgians find this American example not attractive to learn from, or should they decline to find a more appropriate setting — other than the bottom of a staircase — for applicants to approach, then the least that can be expected is for the Belgian consul to treat applicants with the same goodwill and courtesy which Jordan has shown him and his people, not to mention the decorum expected of a man in his diplomatic position.

If the Belgians continue to insist on their need of four weeks to three months for a single visa to any of the Benelux states, it is my advice for these states that it is not in their interest to see this going on. At the same time, my plea goes out to our Foreign Ministry to treat these issues with greater concern and to find radical and serious solutions to these matters. For we are in the age of the communication revolution, and no one can convince me that it is necessary to keep people waiting four weeks to be allowed entry into any country. For heaven's sake, with facsimile, electronic mail and all this computerised communication, a business person might not even know that few days before its time.

I, anxiously, ask of our minister of foreign affairs, whom we all know to be an excellent diplomat, to please give this matter his most urgent attention and take all necessary steps to put things in order.

Abdullah Al Khatib, President, The General Union of Voluntary Societies in Jordan.

Sudan's rulers see prosperity, people bemoan poverty

By Samia Nakhoul Reuter

KHARTOUM — Inside the pink-stone British-built treasury, Sudan's finance minister speaks of a healthy self-reliant economy, targets met and a rosy future.

But outside the grandiose arched building the flawed reality hits you in the face. People are angry and resentful. They complain of inflation, hardship and low living standards.

Hyperinflation has hit this huge African country in recent years, impoverishing people and adding to the pressures on the Islamic government, in power since 1989.

The National Islamic Front (NIF), the ruling power behind Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Al Bashir's government, says inflation is the natural result of radical liberalisation. Officials preach the country is switching from years of living on aid to a new self-reliance, and people should put up with the transition.

"Sudan is a very rich country," Hassan Al Turabi, the influential head of the National Islamic Front, told Reuters.

"In a couple of years we will be exporting oil. We have animal wealth. We have mineral resources, we have agriculture and arable land. It is going to be exploited."

"They are turning towards their own wealth. We're mobilising people. We know there is a transition and we have to struggle."

With the certainty of ideologies, officials often brush off criticism of soaring inflation, saying it only affects salaried workers, a minority in an agriculture-based economy where most people are farmers who have something to sell as well as to buy.



Omar Hassan Al Bashir

But ordinary Sudanese, who have suffered famine and drought since independence from Britain in 1956 as well as a 12-year-old civil war in the south, wonder how much longer they must wait as their living standards continue to decline.

At Omdurman market, a warren of shops and stalls that serve the capital Khartoum, traders sit around in largely empty shops. Few people come in and even fewer buy rather than just browse.

Othman Ibrahim, a tailor and father of six, sat behind his sewing machine with a bag stacked with gallabiyas (traditional robes) made during the Muslim feast of Al Adha in May and still awaiting the customers who ordered them.

But they never returned because they could not pay the \$1.50 bill, leaving Mr. Ibrahim mired in debt. "I am borrowing money from the merchant next door to keep going and when the people come and

pay me I will give him back his money. I even bought the cloth with a loan. I have been borrowing for months," Mr. Ibrahim said.

Ahmad Youssef, a merchant, said: "We're living on the edge. If we sell, we eat. If we do not, we cannot," he said. "I used to buy one kilo of meat every day, now I buy a quarter of a kilo every few days. I don't buy fruits or sweets for the children."

Finance Minister Abdullah Hassan Ahmad sees things differently and has a string of statistics to support his case.

According to him, gross domestic product (GDP) has increased annually by an average of 8.5 per cent since the reform programme began three years ago.

Agricultural production has gone up and Sudan now has a surplus to export, he said. Exports increased from \$308 million in the financial year 1993-94 to over \$500 million in 1994-95. He said inflation went down to 56

per cent in May from 130 per cent last year.

Western diplomats attribute the success to good rain rather than to the government. "The GDP went up because they had a good harvest last year. If there is a good rain, there is a good harvest. If rain is bad, it is a disaster," one said.

Sudan's foreign debt is officially \$12 billion, though some foreign economists say it is at least \$16 billion, a staggering 30 years or so of export earnings. Foreign economists put inflation at more than 80 per cent.

Many traders blame the government's radical Islamic ideology, and the international conflicts it has drawn Sudan into, for their economic woes.

"Since this government came we have had strong enmity with the West and a severe boycott by most countries. This government came out with policies that strangled Sudan. We became isolated and this has deprived Sudan of many things," said a shopkeeper.

Khartoum has become more and more economically and politically isolated from the West since the Islamists came to power in a 1989 coup.

The United States lists Sudan as a state which sponsors terrorism.

The tussle with the West has cost Sudan an estimated \$800 million a year in aid. Sudan's sympathy with Iraq in the Gulf war in 1991 added to its woes, depriving it of remittances from Sudanese expatriate workers who had to leave Kuwait.

But officials say people should appreciate self-reliance.

"Years back this country was hungry. People were feeding us from abroad. Our economy is self-sufficient now," Dr. Turabi said.

"Sudan is an independent country," he added.

Mururoa shadows the mark

France's new nationalism may be splitting the atoms of a federal Europe, writes David Marsh

JACQUES CHIRAC'S stand backing military action in Bosnia, high in profile and in a haughty, represents just one of the ways the new president has sought to stamp the imperial mark of Gaullism on France's international policies. By postponing implementation of the Schengen agreement to scrap European Union (EU) border controls, and announcing the resumption of nuclear tests at Mururoa atoll, Mr. Chirac has served notice that the tricolour is back in fashion.

France's renewed emphasis on national sovereignty promises far-reaching repercussions for French links with Germany and the future of the EU. In his blustering debut on the European stage, Mr. Chirac has underestimated — or chosen to ignore — the effect of his style of government on relations with close allies such as Germany and Spain: the view from Madrid and Bonn is that Mr. Chirac's impulsive manner has unsettled France's partners. After waiting two decades to gain France's highest political office, the president gives the impression of being in such a hurry to wield power that he overlooks the pitfalls of applying it unwisely.

Mr. Chirac's huffing and puffing smacks of certain brave desperation. At least in part, his rearward action is designed to bolster France's international standing after the upsets caused by the end of the cold war and German reunification. Remarkably, Mr. Chirac's efforts to bale out the leaking vessel of national independence were barely noticed in Britain during the Conservative leadership battle, an event which, in the ranking list of factors influencing Europe's destiny, appears by comparison a tawdry side-show. In reality, the shifts in the political landscape in France should both comfort Tory Eurosceptics and, simultaneously, take the wind — or at least some of the more belligerent flailing — out of their sails. As a result of the new mood in Paris, the "federalised" Franco-German-run Europe that Euro-sceptics obsessively love to loathe now seems a lot less likely.

One of the chief sources of inspiration for the centrepiece of the Maastricht treaty — economic and monetary union (EMU) by 1999 — is France's long-standing wish to dismantle the mark by subsuming it into a single European currency. However, by showing a mailed fist in the South Pacific, Mr. Chirac has weakened his hand in Frankfurt. When Germany's main European partner opts to flaunt its sovereignty over nuclear defence, the Germans cannot be blamed for growing more reluctant to relinquish their own in the field of money.

French policy-makers, who for 10 years have sought to whittle away Germany's control of its currency, should know by now that the Germans' force of dissuasion is called the mark. Germany's resolve not to give it away lightly is founded on the belief that a strong currency provides the supreme deterrence against an evil more potent than armies: inflation. The Bundesbank's current refusal to lower interest rates further, in spite of the desire in Paris for support for the Bank of France's cautious easing, is one more reminder of Germany's strategy of making EMU entry barriers as high and wide as possible. And the call last week from Alain Madelin, France's economy minister, for French interest rates to be two percentage points lower illustrates the potential for explosive disagreement in Paris on the conduct of monetary policy.

Whatever the German wish for partnership with France, strong anti-nuclear opposition in Germany makes it hardly surprising that Chancellors Helmut Kohl and other senior government politicians have shown disquiet over the atomic tests. France's misjudgement of reaction in Germany shows similarities to the Shell oil company's underestimation of the German environmentalist lobby over the planned dumping at sea of the Brent Spar oil platform. French politicians who say testing will help Europe to deter nuclear adventurism by such states as Libya or Iraq fail to recognise the emotional hold of the nuclear issue in Germany. Writers in the conservative *Le Figaro*, who draw parallels between the planned resumption of tests and France's help in securing deployment of nuclear missiles in Germany in the early eighties, do not realise that the world has moved on. The disappearance of the threat of a mass attack from NATO's former adversaries in the east has made the Germans still more hostile to the military use of the atom. And the West's collective failure in Bosnia (in which a contributory role was played by Germany's misguided drive to recognise Croatia in 1991) has gravely weakened the belief of the German public in a functioning European defence policy.

In the hargaining over the future of the EU, due to resume in next year's Maastricht follow-up conference, Mr. Chirac's "France first" policies make even more improbable an agreement between France and Germany on some form of European political union. This has an impact on EMU because Germany has repeatedly said that a single currency will not be feasible without progress towards political union. The top-level understanding in Bonn is that without an accord on this matter next year, the German parliament will not vote in favour of EMU who called on to do so in 1998. Partly because of disagreement in Germany itself on whether political union is desirable, the Germans take care never completely to define what this objective should look like. However, important preconditions for political union are greater EU powers in foreign policy and defence, as well as over immigration and police affairs. Without a radical shift in thinking in Paris, any advance next year towards more "supranational" decision-making on these fronts can be ruled out. Furthermore, France's enthusiasm for another German demand — more muscle for the European Parliament — is likely to have cooled further after Mr. Chirac's rough reception earlier this month from Strasbourg deplores protesting against the atomic tests.

In the debate over the mark, Mr. Chirac's nuclear manoeuvres will cause further frowns in the hars and shopping malls of Germany. Last month in Paris, in a speech at the headquarters of the French Banking Association, Hans Tietmeyer, the Bundesbank president, looked almost beatific when he pointed out how opinion polls showed 70 per cent of Germans opposed a single European currency. More than a little cynically, considering the Bundesbank's abiding scepticism about this target, Mr. Tietmeyer called for a political campaign in Germany to improve acceptance of EMU.

Mr. Chirac's nuclear fuite en avant makes selling the single currency to the German electorate a still more uphill struggle. The message is clear, playing tough in Mururoa puts the mark further from France's grip. It would be a rich paradox if Mr. Chirac's attempt to reinvent France's credentials as a Grande Nation hastened its progressive marginalisation on the strategic map of Europe.

The writer is Director of European Strategy at Robert Fleming, the London-based investment bank. The above article is reprinted from the Independent.

Blood lust of the pedigree dog of war

THE NAZIS called it "der Siegeswille" ("will to win"), one side's overarching desire for victory which will always defeat the enemy. Last week he arrived on the heights overlooking Zepa, to make that safe haven unsafe personally.

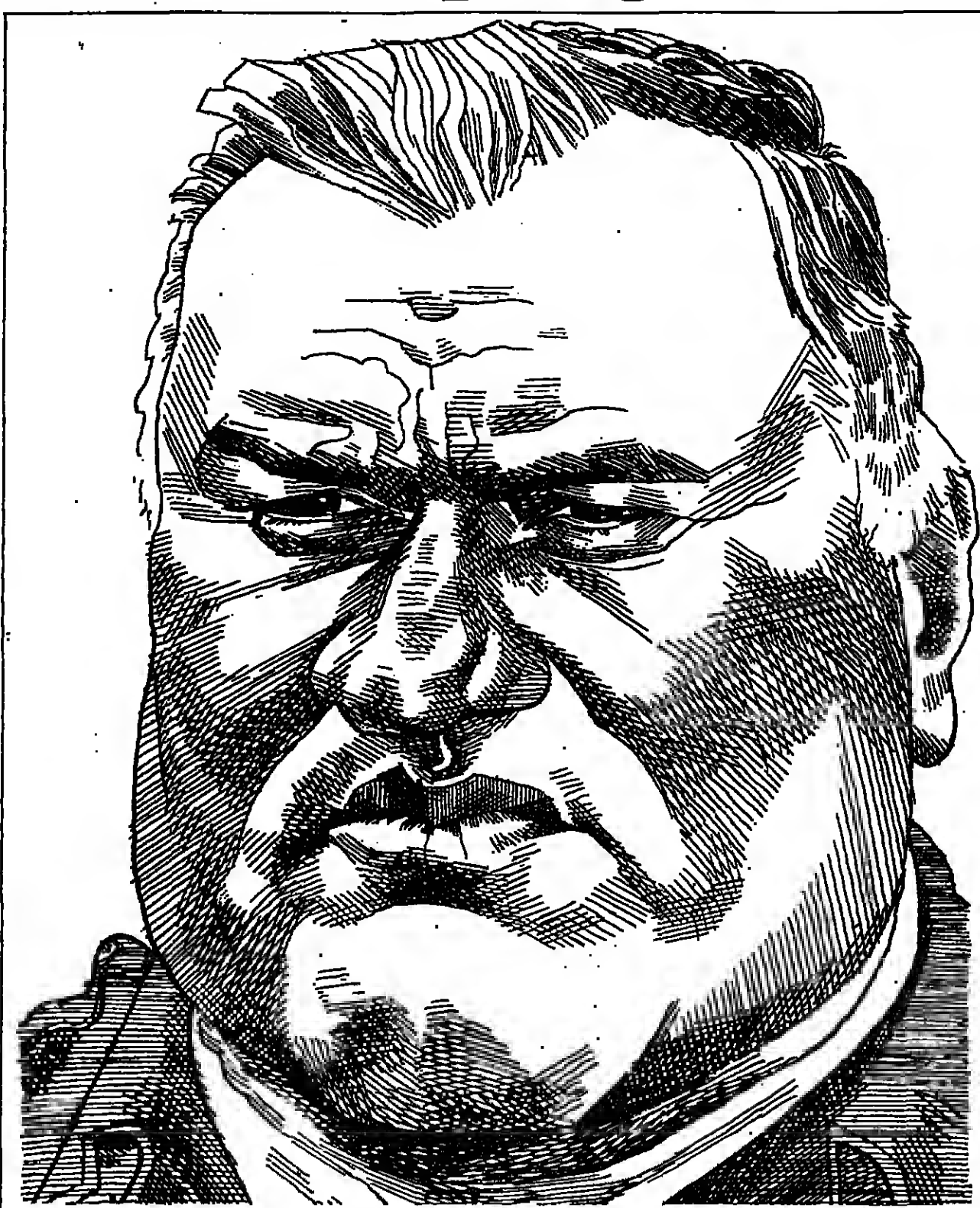
A few days before he was filmed gloating on the streets of Srebrenica, tenderly patting a Muslim head à la Saddam Hussein, overseeing a Serb crew which had spun off the road back on to an even keel and, best of all, drinking with the defeated. The television pictures of General Ratko Mladic, slivovitz in his hand, leaning at the traumatised Dutch U.N. commander of Srebrenica, Lt-Col. Theo Karremans, told the story of who has the greatest "will-to-win": The Serbs or the West. Mladic had tricked Karremans, first by getting him to have a drink, then ordering in the TV cameras to capture the moment the U.N. appeared to toast the extinction of its own safe haven. For Mladic, no humiliation of the U.N. is too small.

It was a classic move by perhaps the most skillful general of the new world order, a cruel genius who has seen off the best of the West's commanders. Maybe there are better generals, but not one has yet to stand up to him. Mladic is the subtlest bully in the Balkans, who has produced a textbook performance: He times his offensives perfectly, knowing when to flatten the enemy and when to stay his hand, when to talk peace, when to make war.

When the French General, Francis Briguefont, the last but one U.N. commander in Bosnia, met Mladic for the first time, he came back almost starry-eyed, telling reporters: "He is a real chief." Everyone agrees that he has an intimidating physical presence. Not tall, maybe 5ft 7ins, but almost as wide. He has the neck of a bull and the clear blue eyes of a Balkan Enoch Powell.

That Mladic is also a monster with the blood of hundreds of thousands on his hands does not seem to trouble him, nor should it occlude our understanding of the man who, more than anyone else, is shaping the new history of Europe — disregarding the pieties about morality, democracy and self-determination. Talking piety to Mladic is like feeding biscuits to a dog. He gobbles them up and harks for more.

This morning Mladic was studying the small print of the London fun-link: In particular, the notion that NATO air strikes will be predicted on Bosnian Serb attacks on the safe have of Gorazde town, all three square kilometres of it. The wider haven, the outlying villages and countryside



Ratko Mladic: Well named at birth as Rat in Serbo-Croat means war

which sustain it, are fair game. So, too, are the outskirts of Bihac, Sarajevo and Tuzla. But there won't be any attacks in the near future on Gorazde town centre. Mladic knows that all he has to do is wait until the fickle flea of Western conscience hops off somewhere else. And then, when no one is watching, he will strike again.

Ratko Mladic was brought up on blood, like a hawk. His father, Nedja, was killed by the Ustaša, the Croat Nazis, on his second birthday, part of the horrors of the World War II in former Yugoslavia, when Serbs were persecuted wholesale. That memory has done much to foment the demoted paranoia which fits Mladic and his countrymen. But, according to Noel Malcolm's definitive *Bosnia: A Short History*, the suffering of the Serbs was not unique. Not all the children of the victims turned mass-murderers.

Ratko means well-named. "Rat" means "war" to Serbo-Croat, "ko" a diminutive for either Ratimir (War or Peace) or Ratislav (War of the Serbs). He was one of Tito's children. In 1965, he graduated from the country's military academy and joined the Communist Party, a good start on the career ladder of the Yugoslav People's Army, the JNA.

In 1991, former Yugoslavia erupted. Mladic was sent to Knin, epicentre of the rebel Serbs of Croatia. He hunched well, his artillery massacring Croat civilians with abandon. A fierce disciplinarian, Mladic did nothing to rein in this cruelty.

There is much talk of his bravery. In August 1991, Mladic led troops to break the siege of a Serb army barracks near Vukovar. The road was blocked by a has booby-trapped with dynamite. An engineering unit had been unable to defuse

the bombs. But Mladic, watched by reporters, got on the bus and cut the detonator wires. At least, that is the myth. And Mladic is a man about whom myths are readily woven.

In May 1992, Slobodan Milosevic, the puppet-master of Belgrade, sent Mladic to join the new Bosnian Serb army. For the purposes of blasting the Bosnian people, who liked the multi-ethnicity of old Yugoslavia, into submission he invented a new lexicon of artillery commands: "Roast!" "Pound them senseless!" Mladic was recorded that month ordering the shelling of the capital with 155mm howitzers, the target two suburbs. "Burn

it all," he snapped. "Bombard both of them. Leave the 82mm and the 120mm, and use the heaviest."

Sarajevo, hellish as it was, was not so bad compared with what was going on in the countryside: Rape, mass-murder, concentration camps. Mladic is a hands-on general. For his role in the 1992 genocide, the United States branded him a war criminal.

Intriguingly, in 1994, Belgrade turned on its appointed warrior. That March, a retired INA officer, Gajo Petkovic, called Mladic "conceited," a "cynic and a sadist" and accused him of being carried away by rage and brutality. "Petkovic — it seems

with the tacit assent of Milosevic — accused Mladic of having "the undoubted responsibility for the crimes of members of the army he led." That night, Petkovic says, Mladic called him up from the Bosnian Serb headquarters at Pale. The general was not best pleased: "You'll get yours soon. You'll remember who Ratko Mladic is."

Later that month, Mladic's beloved daughter, Ana, a 23-year-old medical student, took out a revolver and blew her head off. Friends said she had been appalled by the Petkovic attack.

He loves playing mind-games with the enemy. When he is on the offensive he disappears. General Sir Michael Rose, the former U.N. top man in Bosnia, once tried to get through to him to find that he was speaking to an answering machine. So he reverted to faxing threats of air strikes; Mladic disconnected his fax.

Michael Williams, a former U.N. information chief, recalls a scene during a coffee break in 18-hour talks in Belgrade when Mladic snapped. "He was wearing a 1958 suit, black, with a black shirt, because he was in mourning for his daughter. At one point his face went bright red, his veins standing out on the neck. 'Don't you tell me about NATO bombers. If you use them, we will be merciless in our response.'"

Contempt for the U.N.; contempt, too, for his political "master," Radovan Karadzic, whose corruption is legion. The Serbian rumour machine does not suggest Mladic is bent, but this is a country where people say of him: "He is a god." At the 1994 Geneva peace talks, Mladic showed who was boss. Karadzic had been entirely negative, threatening to pull out of the talks after the Bosnian government had insisted on only a month-long ceasefire. Mladic clipped in: "Let's do it. Why not?" That was the "pragmatic" Mladic; a man more chilling than the paranoid.

The bad press bounces off Mladic's pachyderm neck. BBC reporter Martin Bell has written a coldly angry book on Bosnia, *In Harm's Way*, to be published in September. In it he quotes Mladic's retort to a Western military officer: "I don't care what the press says about me because I will be vindicated by history." Mladic, modestly compares himself to Napoleon. This weekend the world waits for Wellington. And waits. And waits...

The Observer

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Serbs retreat

(Continued from page 1)

by itself and extend maximum help to Bosnia to liberate Bihac," he said.

Krajina Serb leader Milan Martić told reporters on Sunday he believed an attack on Knin was possible.

Bosnian federation President, Kresimir Zubak, a Croat, said Croat forces were now poised to penetrate deep into Serb-held north-central Bosnia and encroach on Knin.

Bihac's survival is crucial for Zagreb's quest to cut off the Knin Serbs from Bosnia to press them into talks on reintegration or, failing that, pave the way for reconquest.

Karl Gorinsek, a well-informed Croatian military analyst, said a third of some 30,000 Croat troops in western Bosnia were Croatian army regulars with 10,000 more due in by mid-week.

Bosnia and Croatia lost 70 per cent and 30 per cent of their territory respectively in wars with separatist Serbs sparked by the breakup of multinational federal Yugoslavia in 1991-92.

The Zagreb and Sarajevo governments last year forced a military bloc to bolster a new Muslim-Croat federation in Bosnia. Mr. Tudjman promised intervention to save Bihac in response to Bosnian government appeals last week.

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- 2- Tender proposals should be submitted by hand to the chairman of the central tendering committee not later than 12:00 noon, Sunday August 20th 1995.
- 3- Each tender shall be accompanied by tender bid bond in favour of the Jordan University of Science & Technology Chairman of Central Tendering Committee drawn from or approved by an accredited bank in Jordan in an amount not less than five percent (5%) of the total tender sum such bond shall remain valid for a period of not less than three months from the closing date of the tender submission.
- 4- Tender proposals not abiding by the above mentioned conditions and the conditions mentioned in the tender documents will not be considered.

Chairman, Central Tenders Committee
Dr. Hamad Dewairy

Business Daily Beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

'Economic reform programme producing positive results'

Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb said the economic reform programme launched six years ago produced several positive results.

Mr. Abul Ragheb said the budget deficit dropped significantly, the exchange rate of the Jordanian dinar stable and economic growth rose to six per cent over the past two years. Speaking at a seminar organised by the International Islamic Centre for Studies and Information, Mr. Abul Ragheb said the government has taken several measures to activate the role of the private sector in the national economy, mainly through privatisation and updating laws and legislation. He added that the government has also worked on establishing and activating institutions such as the Jordan Exports Development and Commercial Centres Corporation, the Development and Employment Fund, the Standards and Specification Corporation and the Industrial Cities Corporation. He said the government was relying more on local revenues at the present time, especially that Jordan was shouldering the heavy burdens of foreign debts, a 17 per cent unemployment rate and poverty, with 30 per cent of the population living under the poverty line (Al Aswad).

A new company named the Modern Food and Vegetable Oil Industries Company was established with a total capital of JD 3 million. The establishment of the company was announced at a meeting held Saturday at the Amman Chamber of Commerce. The meeting was attended by the company's constituent assembly, the Ministry of Industry and Trade's companies' controller and a representative of the Amman Financial Market (AJF).

Minister of Post and Communications Jamal Saraiab said the Kingdom's communications sector was on the threshold of a new era as the new communications draft law was finalised and is awaiting endorsement. Mr. Saraiab said the draft law provides for turning the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) into a company operated on commercial basis. In an address at a graduation ceremony at the Communications College in Amman, Mr. Saraiab said his ministry was seeking to have the TCC offer distinguished services to citizens and added that the communications sector in the Kingdom will witness qualitative progress that will be felt by subscribers. He said this will be achieved when the national communications project is completed (Al Rai).

UAE court seeks repatriation of BCCI man

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A United Arab Emirates (UAE) court on Sunday adjourned the trial of several BCCI defendants until September 24 and renewed its call for the prosecution to bring back the collapsed bank's former chief.

After a three-hour session behind closed doors, the judge decided to adjourn hearings to allow for the presentation of more documents and repatriation of former chief executive of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, Mohammad Swaleh Naqvi, from the United States.

The judge also rejected fresh defence requests for the release of the only three defendants who have remained in Abu Dhabi's central prison.

The court decided to keep those three in jail and asked the prosecution to try and bring back Naqvi, a court source said.

The three in prison are Hassan Kazem, a Pakistani, and Abdul Hafeez Ahmed and Zafer Hussain of Britain. They were sentenced to six years in jail last year but both the prosecution and the defence appealed against the verdict.

Five other defendants have been released after serving their three-year prison terms while another was set free for health reasons. Another was

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (July 24 - July 28, 1995)

AMMAN — The U.S. unit depreciated modestly against major currencies during the past week. It ended the week 0.48 per cent lower against the yen, 0.38 per cent lower against the mark, and 0.44 per cent lower against sterling.

The dollar traded in narrow ranges against other major currencies Monday. Reports indicated that investors reacted to news that the Japanese Socialist Party of Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama won only 16 seats of the 126 seats at stake in polls. The election results triggered dealers' worries that Mr. Murayama's government might not be able to achieve its objectives that aim at stimulating the Japanese economy.

The U.S. unit rose against other major currencies Tuesday after the release of U.S. economic statistics pointing to a stronger than anticipated economy. U.S. consumer confidence rose to 99.9 in July, compared to 94.6 in June, the first rise since April, while U.S. existing home sales surged by 6.5 per cent in June. Meanwhile, reports indicated that expectations that the Bundesbank might drive German interest rates lower contributed to the dollar's rise against the mark.

The dollar declined against the mark and sterling Wednesday, while appreciating marginally against the yen. Reports indicated that, in the absence of fundamental factors, dealers followed technical factors pushing the dollar lower. Moreover, news that the Bundesbank left its securities repurchase rate unchanged put pressure on the dollar.

The dollar continued its marginal depreciation against the mark and sterling Thursday. Reports indicated that trading was thin as dealers were waiting for the release of second quarter U.S. gross domestic product figures the following day.

The U.S. unit declined marginally against the mark and sterling, while rising marginally against the yen at the end of the week. In early trading hours, the dollar depreciated following a U.S. bond market decline, but it recovered later to close slightly lower than Thursday's close. Meanwhile, the long anticipated second quarter U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) figures were released, showing a growth rate of only 0.5 per cent in the second quarter. The figures were in line with expectations, and thus had little impact on exchange rates; however, they left analysts divided on whether the Fed will ease U.S. monetary policy at its next meeting. On the other hand, the dollar rose against the yen on expectations that the Bank of Japan will soon move to lower the Japanese interest rates further.

The U.S. unit, thus ended the week at 1.3808 marks, 88.11 yen and at \$1.6010 to sterling.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar			
Currency	July 21 - 1995	July 28 - 1995	Percent Change
Sterling Pound*	1.5940	1.6010	(0.44) %
Deutsche Mark	1.3660	1.3808	(0.28) %
Swiss Franc	1.1550	1.1488	(0.54) %
French Franc	4.8215	4.7810	(0.85) %
Japanese Yen	88.53	88.11	(0.48) %

Euro-Currency Interest Rates*			
Currency	1-Month (%)	1-Year (%)	1-Month (%)
U.S. Dollar	5.78	5.68	5.75
Sterling Pound	6.62	7.12	6.68
Deutsche Mark	4.43	4.56	4.43
Swiss Franc	2.50	3.06	2.50
French Franc	6.12	5.81	6.21
Japanese Yen	0.81	0.75	0.78

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin		
Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6970	0.6990
Sterling Pound	1.1144	1.1200
Deutsche Mark	0.5045	0.5070
Swiss Franc	0.6065	0.6095
French Franc	0.1437	0.1464
Japanese Yen	0.7899	0.7938
Dutch Guilder	0.4495	0.4517
Swedish Krona	-	-
Italian Lira	0.0439	0.0441
Belgian Franc	-	-

Kuwait provides only shine to dull Arab markets

DUBAI (R) — Kuwait provided the only shine to a string of dull Arab stock markets last week, with the market index there hitting five successive post-Gulf war highs in as many days.

Dealers said volumes on most other Arab markets slipped in the week, and trade was likely to remain subdued throughout August thanks to the continued absence of major market players.

Heightened expectations that parliament would pass a bill easing repayment terms for \$20 billion in bad debt owed partly by some listed firms continued to spur share buying in Kuwait.

The overall index set a new record high every day, soaring 5.1 per cent, or 58 points, in the week to 1,188 — its highest level since it was re-

vived last year. The index was suspended for 3½ years after Iraq's August 1990 invasion.

Volumes in Kuwait also kept climbing, rising 30 per cent to 409 million shares, a record high for any week since the war.

Among blue chips, mobile communications jumped 3.5 per cent to 890 fills.

In Jordan, stocks were mostly quiet as investors

wanted for the outcome of a parliamentary debate on an economic reforms package. The index was up 1.7 per cent at 153.3 points.

In very light trade, Egyptian shares were little changed, with brokers dismissing the index's small decline and saying underlying sentiment was bullish. They said volume was expected to pick up at the end of August, which might help lift the market off recent 10-month lows.

Amreya Cement Amri. Ca rose 2.5 pounds to 48 pounds. Paints and Chemical Industries Pach. Ca gained 20

pounds to 650.

Volumes slumped to their lowest levels so far this year on the unofficial United Arab Emirates bourse, leaving most share prices unchanged. Market leader Etisalat was well bid at between 815 and 820 dirhams, but no offers were to be seen.

Stocks were steady in Bahrain, Oman and Saudi Arabia, while in Qatar, share prices edged up, but trade was thin.

On the Beirut secondary market Solideir shares reversed last week's small fall, ending slightly higher.

Court clears way for Aramco to buy into Greek company

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — A magistrate's court Friday appointed two heirs of an oil family's fortune to act as temporary trustees of their late father's shares, allowing 50 per cent of Greece's Motor Oil (Hellas) Corinth Refineries to be sold to Saudi Aramco before a July 31 deadline.

Judge Katerini Papatheodorou appointed Pavlos and Dimosthenis Vardinoyannis temporary trustees of the shares that were left to them and their sister Ioanna and brother Pyrrhos by their father, Nikos, who died in 1975.

The four siblings have equal shares totalling 32 per cent of a Greek corporation that owns 50 per cent of the refinery company, Saudi Aramco, in its first major venture into the European market, agreed in April to pay \$301,500,000 for 50 per cent of the Greek company, as long as there was a shareholders' agreement on the sale.

But Ioanna and Pyrrhos earlier this year protested, saying that they had not been kept informed about com-

pany issues by their two uncles, Vardis and Theodoros, who ran Motor Oil and other companies after their father's death.

Pavlos Vardinoyannis asked the court for the temporary measure to be taken so that the agreement with Saudi Aramco would not fall through before another court is due to discuss the differences between the family members in October.

Motor Oil says it needs the money from the sale in order to pay off short- and mid-term debts and to strengthen itself in order to be more competitive in the Balkans, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

It was not immediately clear when the final agreement between Motor Oil and Saudi Aramco would be signed.

Judge Papatheodorou said she was granting Pavlos Vardinoyannis' request because of the urgency of the July 31 deadline and chided the other Vardinoyannis children for not having shown an interest in the company before this point.

Jordan Yellow Pages Released

Jordan Yellow Pages 1995 - 1996, the comprehensive business telephone directory with 20,000 business listings and 2,000 advertisers has been released to the public today. THE YELLOW PAGES are produced by The Directories company, a Canadian - Jordanian joint venture between Hashemite Advertising of Jordan, and Tele-Direct (Bell Canada) the world's largest Yellow Pages producer. For the third successive year, JORDAN YELLOW PAGES have been produced and delivered on time. Hassan Abbadi - Chairman, & Robert Mackett - General Manager, took great pride in delivering the first copies to His Majesty King Hussein, Minister of Telecommunications Jamal Sarayrah, TCC General Manager Walid Dweik, and TCC Facilities Dept. Manager Eng. Abdel Majid Bashairah.

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Schumacher wins German GP

HOCKENHEIM, Germany (AP) — Formula One champion Michael Schumacher cruised to an easy victory Sunday and became the first home driver to win the German Grand Prix after his challenger Damon Hill went out one lap into the race.

Hill, who started out of pole position after setting the fastest time in qualifying in his Williams-rental, spun out of control at the end of the first lap, heading into the north curve of the Hockenheim ring.

In five pole starts this season, Hill has not won a race. The Briton has two wins, both of them coming from behind.

Schumacher's fifth victory of the Grand Prix season extended his lead in drivers' standings over Hill to 21 points. By picking up 10 points Sunday, he now has a total of 56, while Hill stayed at 35 after nine of the season's 17 races.

Schumacher, who started from the front row in second position in his Benetton-

Renault, led for most of the race once Hill careened into the gravel and the wall of tires. The German lost the lead only after making the first of his two pit stops at lap 18, but was back in the front on lap 24.

"Delighted is not the right word," Schumacher said after the race. "It's crazy, to win at here, to win in Germany, in front of these fans, it's crazy, it's unbelievable, it's a dream."

Commenting on Hill's spin, Schumacher said: "I thought the first corner could be quite slippery and I braked early. I saw Damon slide sideways and hit the wall and I couldn't believe it."

"This win here is more emotional for me than the world championship title," he said.

David Coulthard of Britain, Hill's Williams-Renault teammate, finished second, while last year's winner Gerhard Berger of Austria came in third in a Ferrari. Berger was penalised 10

seconds for anticipating the start and climbed his way to the podium after dropping as far behind as 14th.

The second Ferrari driver, Jean Alesi of France, went out with engine trouble on lap 12.

As Schumacher went across the finish line, 100,000 fans celebrated by shooting off flares and firecrackers and waving thousands of flags on a sunny, warm day.

Schumacher posted a time of one hour, 22 minutes, 56.043 seconds for the 45-lap race on the 6.823-kilometre circuit.

Coulthard, who had only one tire change, was 5.988 seconds behind Schumacher after the German eased up at the end of the race. Berger was one minute, 8.097 seconds behind.

Johnny Herbert of Britain, winner of the British Grand Prix two weeks ago when Hill crashed into Schumacher and took both drivers out of the race, finished fourth, one minute, 23.436 seconds behind Schumacher.

Indurain wins 'Tour de Moscow'

MOSCOW (AP) — Shrugging off fatigue from his Tour de France victory, Miguel Indurain made a last-lap breakaway in the shadow of the Kremlin walls Saturday to capture Russia's first major professional cycling race.

The competition, the 116.6-kilometre (72.5-mile) Masters Criterium, was sponsored by the Tour de France organisers and billed as the unofficial 21st stage of that famous race.

Seventy-seven Tour de France finishers competed after being flown in the previous day on a charter flight from Paris.

Indurain, wearing the yellow leader's jersey from the Tour he won only six days earlier for a record-setting fifth straight time, lived up to his star billing despite complaining beforehand that he was tired.

Locked in a five-man pack halfway through the 22nd and final of the 5.3-kilometre loops around the Kremlin and through downtown Moscow, he sprinted away from American Lance Armstrong and won easily in an unofficial 2 hours, 36 minutes and 46 seconds.



Cyclists ride past the St. Basil Cathedral on the Red Square during the international "Masters Criterium" race in Moscow Saturday. Some 62 international cyclists took part in the race (AFP photo)

China wins Asian basketball crown

SHIZUOKA, Japan (AP) — Defending champion China beat South Korea 94-69 Sunday for the Asian Women's Basketball Championship, and Japan edged Taiwan 68-65 for Asia's last spot in the 1996 Olympics.

The top three teams in the tournament qualified for the Olympics. This was the first time the Japanese women's basketball team had qualified since the 1976 Olympics.

China, South Korea and Japan ended with identical 4-1 records in the level one preliminary round robin, but China and South Korea qualified for the championship game because of better goal averages.

China had little trouble in the final against 1994 Asian runner-up South Korea, jumping to a 46-31 lead at halftime.

Zheng Haixia led China with 36 points. Chung Eun-soon had 24 for South Korea.

In the game for third place, Taiwan took a 41-38 halftime lead before 5,000 spectators.

Japan led by 3 to 4 points for much of the second half, but Taiwan went ahead 65-63 on Chen Shu-ling's goal with 1:04 left.

Japan tied it on Kagari Yamada's basket and edged ahead 66-65 when Chikako Murakami made one of two free throws.

Huang Kuan-Ya of Taiwan missed two free throws with six seconds left, and Murakami then made two more free shots.

Mikiko Hagiwara led Japan with 24 points, while Cheng Hui-Ya led Taiwan with 19.

Thailand won the six-nation Level Two tournament with a 5-0 record and will move up to Level One, replacing Kazakhstan, which was winless in the six-nation Level One.

McRae captures New Zealand Rally title

AUCKLAND, New Zealand (R) — Colin McRae came up with a convincing victory in the Rally of New Zealand on Sunday, his third consecutive win in the event.

The young Scot was able to ease the pace in his Subaru on the final day, allowing his overnight lead of just over a minute to drop to 44 seconds by the end of the event.

Didier Auriol finished second and this lifted the French Toyota driver to the lead in the world championship — by only one point from the Finnish teammate Juha Kankkunen, third in the rally, and Spaniard Carlos Sainz, who missed the event through injury.

Three rounds remain.

McRae now stands fourth in the world championship, 11 points behind Auriol, and leads the Asia-Pacific championship.

The result also promoted Toyota to first place in the manufacturers' championship, eight points ahead of previous leader Mitsubishi. Subaru is six points further back in third.

McRae and his Subaru seemed particularly suited to New Zealand's smooth gravel roads, especially the tighter sections such as the slow, winding Motu stage which he won by 35 seconds on Saturday.

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Top-ranked Agassi, Sampras advance to Canadian Open final



Sweden's Mats Wilander leaves the court to a standing ovation after his 6-2, 6-0 loss to top seed Andre Agassi in the Canadian Open tennis action July 29 (Reuters photo)

MONTREAL (AP) — Andre Agassi and Pete Sampras, the world's top-ranked players, took vastly different routes to the Canadian Open final Saturday.

Agassi, ranked no. 1, routed Mats Wilander 6-2, 6-0 and Sampras, no. 2 since losing the top spot to Agassi in April, had to fight off a match point to beat Thomas Enqvist 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7-3).

"The way Andre has played in the past year, he's oozing with confidence," Sampras said. "The final is a pick'em. We're both playing well."

Sampras, who turns 24 Aug. 12, is coming off his third consecutive Wimbledon title. With a pre-Wimbledon victory at Queen's, he is seeking his third consecutive tournament title.

Agassi, 25, the reigning U.S. and Australian Open champion, is seeking his third Canadian Open title after victories in Toronto in 1992 and last year. He is seeking his 400th match victory.

Agassi's semifinal was held in the afternoon and he got through it in only 55 minutes. Sampras toiled for two hours in a night match against Enqvist.

"I'm in good enough shape that I can bounce back," said Sampras, who has won 395 matches. "You have to be at your best to beat Andre."

"We have a lot of respect for each other. It's a good contrast because he's got the

best return in the game, while my serve is my strength."

Agassi said, simply: "I always want to play against Pete."

Sampras holds an 8-7 edge in career meetings, but Agassi has won two out of three this year.

Agassi had little trouble dispatching Wilander, a tenacious groundstroker whose soft-touch shots fluttered in the stiff breeze on center court.

"Usually, I'm a good wind player," said Wilander, a Swede who had his best tournament since returning to the ATP tour last year after a 22-month retirement.

"He had less trouble with the wind because he hits the ball hard but it affected me more because I couldn't get my pace. And, he's playing really well."

Wilander, 30, knocked off three seeded players to reach the semifinals, including two ranked in the top 10. His current ranking, 102nd, should jump by 40 points.

The world's No. 1 player in 1988, was enjoying his best week since returning to the ATP Tour last year after a 22-month retirement.

It was tougher for Sampras.

Enqvist, 21, who entered the tournament ranked 19th, broke service and took the first set, then had three break points in the opening game.

Seles makes triumphant return, beats Navratilova

ATLANTIC CITY, New Jersey (AFP) — Monica Seles made a triumphant return to women's tennis, overcoming nerves and a 27-month layoff to show the form that made her a champion.

The once and future world number one defeated Martina Navratilova 6-3, 6-2 here Saturday in her first public match since she was stabbed in the back 27 months ago in Hanburg, Germany.

After her victory Seles made it clear that she was delighted to be back.

"It was an unbelievable feeling. I can't even put it into words. It was great," she said.

"I can't believe I played that well out there. It was like a dream. It's what I love to do and I was happy to do it again."

Seles was ranked number one when she was stabbed in the back by a crazed Steffi Graf fan in Hamburg, Germany in April 1993, during a quarter-final match changeover.

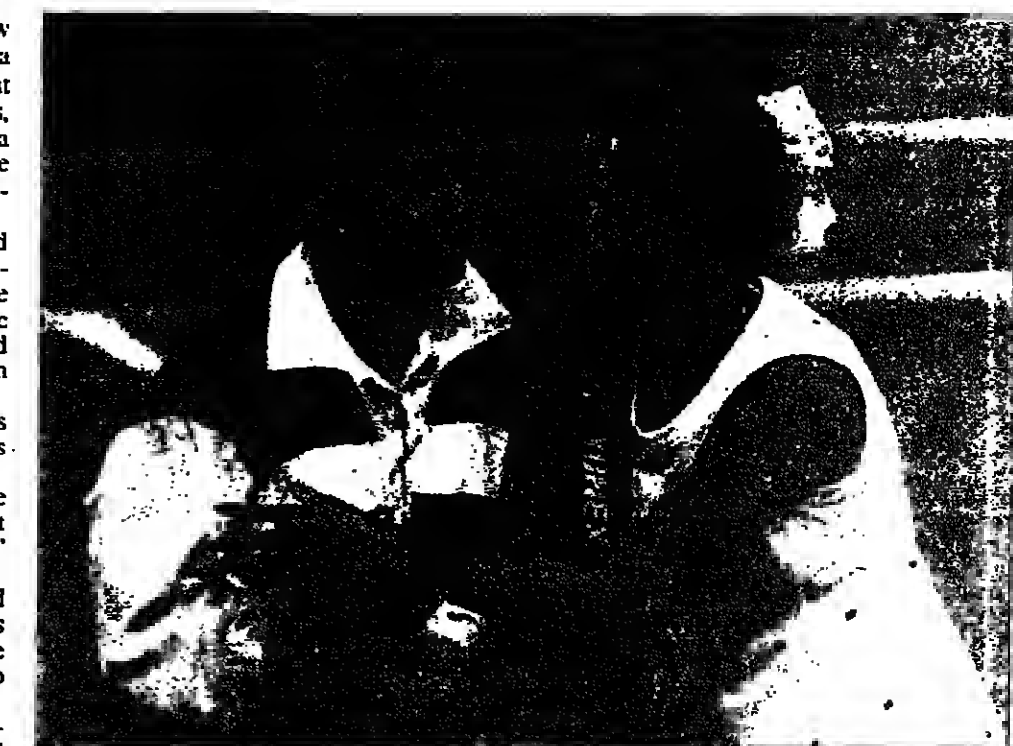
She will be ranked joint number one when she returns to the WTA Tour next month, thanks to a special designation by the circuit.

"I can see light at the end of the tunnel. Hopefully the next few years will be better," Seles said.

"I feel comfortable on the court and that's all that matters. I worked very hard on overcoming it. It was very tough the past two years. Now I'm ready to move on."

Seles, who plans to play the U.S. Open and an under-terminated tuneup event, said her schedule will include the Australian Open in January and the WTA Championship in New York in November, for which she has received a special invitation.

She also said she was looking forward to playing



Monica Seles (R) hugs Martina Navratilova before their exhibition match at the Atlantic City Convention Centre July 29. Seles returned to competitive tennis with a 6-3, 6-2 win over Navratilova (Reuters photo)

in the Olympics and for the U.S. team in the Fed Cup final against Spain later this year.

Seles left Navratilova stranded with a series of fierce passing shots and generally controlled the tempo against the former world number one who retired from singles play last year.

"A lot of those shots I don't even believe I hit," Seles said.

"My passing shots were going really well. I was surprised at a few of them I hit in there. On groundstrokes and passing shots, I couldn't have asked for anything better. This whole thing to me has been a 'wow.' It's wild. It's weird."

Seles said she found playing in front of a crowd again fun, but spent most of the first set fighting nervousness. That went after she broke Navratilova in the

eight game.

She then held to win the first set and opened the second by breaking Navratilova again.

"Leading up to here had been very nerve-wracking, especially the past week or so," Seles said.

"I relaxed a lot more in the second set. I was so nervous. I felt a lot more comfortable once the first set was over and I broke her serve."

Seles struggled with six double faults and 18 unforced errors but kept Navratilova away from the net with power despite staying back most of the time in the 71-minute match.

Seles began the match with a double-fault, then smacked a forehand winner down the line. That's when Navratilova knew the Seles of old was back.

"The second shot was a laser right down the line,"

Navratilova said. "I just went, 'ok, here she goes again.'"

"Monica is going to be a contender. I didn't see anything different from 2 1/2 years ago, like she hadn't missed a beat. I didn't see any gap. It was like a time warp. Physically and emotionally she seemed fine."

Navratilova, who at 38 is 17 years older than Monica, said she was surprised to see Seles walk through crowds and sign autographs.

After the match, Seles said she had no lingering fears.

"I felt very comfortable," she said. "Everyone was so nice and said wonderful things. I was at ease."

Security was tight for the exhibition, with a security guard, a table and a curtained barrier behind Seles. Guards on every floor aisle kept watch on the crowd of 7,527 as well as the match.

UAE to build huge motor racing centre

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is planning to build the Middle East's first car race track that will include training and repair centres, vehicle shows and other sports facilities, officials said Sunday.

Abu Dhabi's ruling family, said it would be a giant project which could have foreign partners.

"Initial studies expect this project to benefit all investors as it will give the chance to all parties seeking to participate in it, Sheikh sultan said.
"The race track will be the

first in the region as such facilities are concentrated in Europe, the United States and Australia," he told the official news agency WAM.

He said the project in Abu Dhabi would include centres for car shows, conferences, maintenance and repair, a water sports club, a golf course, a skating rink, commercial centres, a hotel and residential units.

Sheikh Sultan, interviewed in Britain, said the project had been under study since 1993 and contacts were underway with British experts and specialised international companies to carry it out. He did not mention its costs.

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